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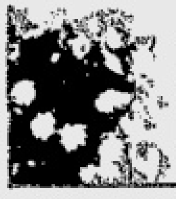

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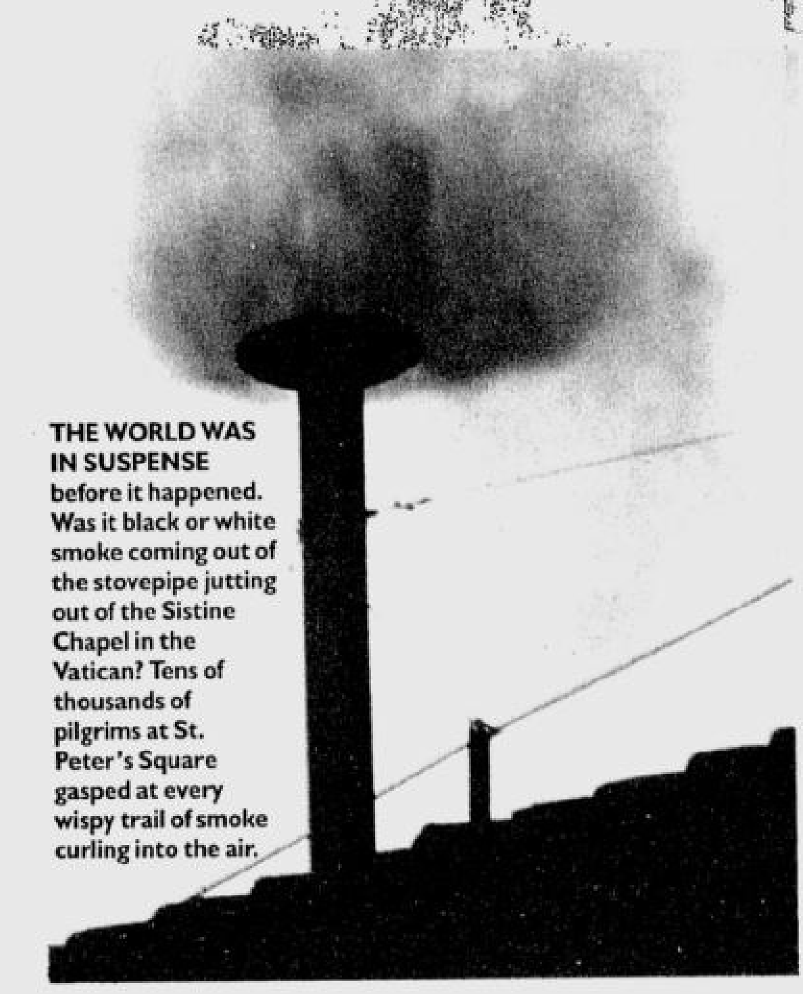

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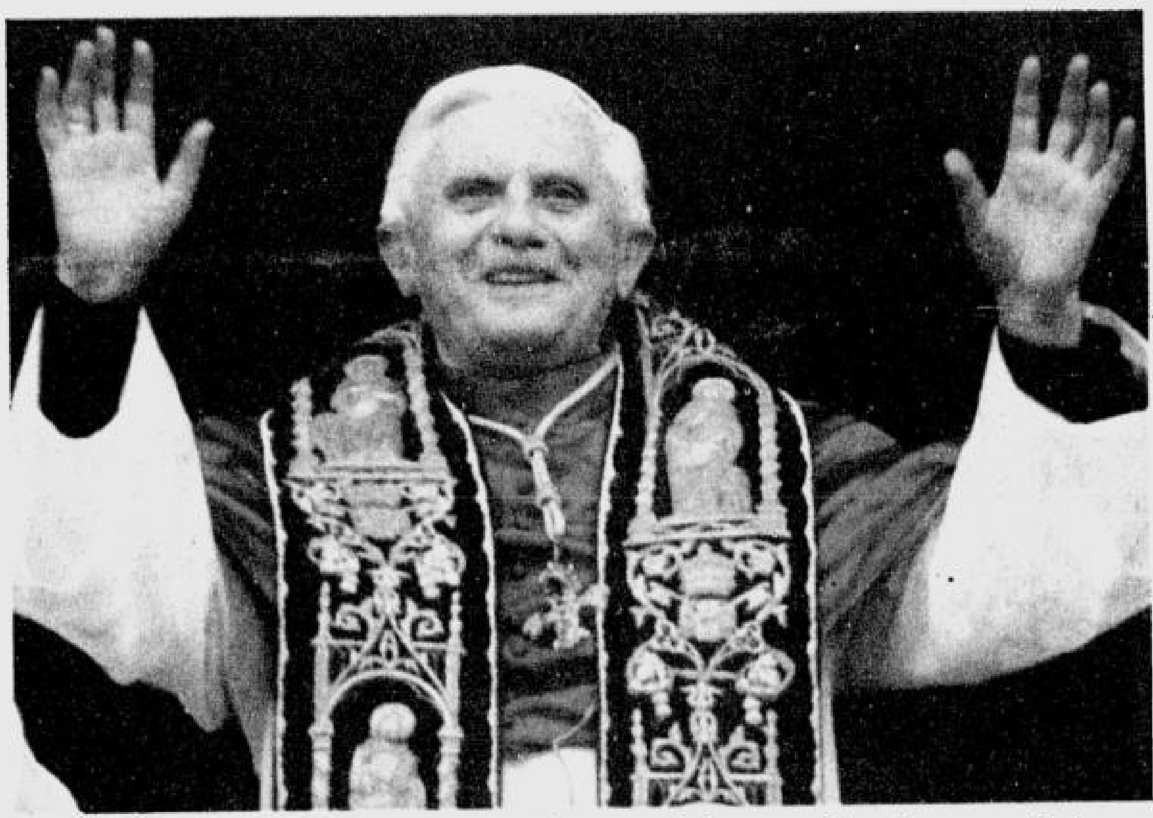

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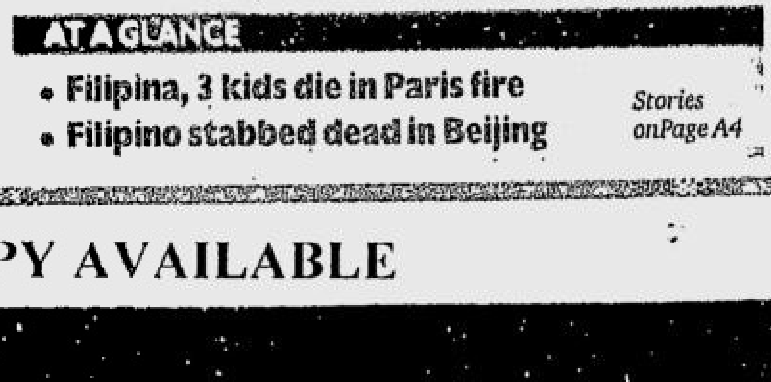

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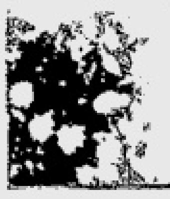

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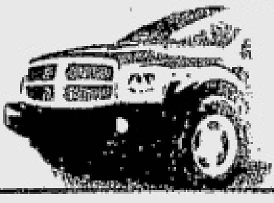

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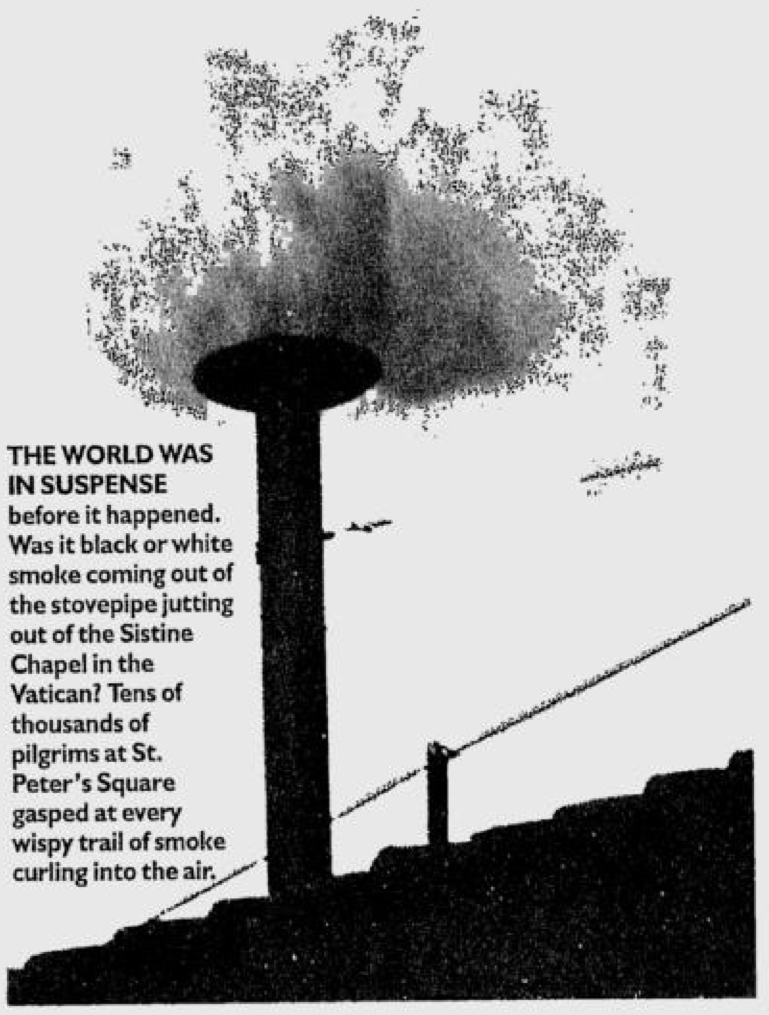

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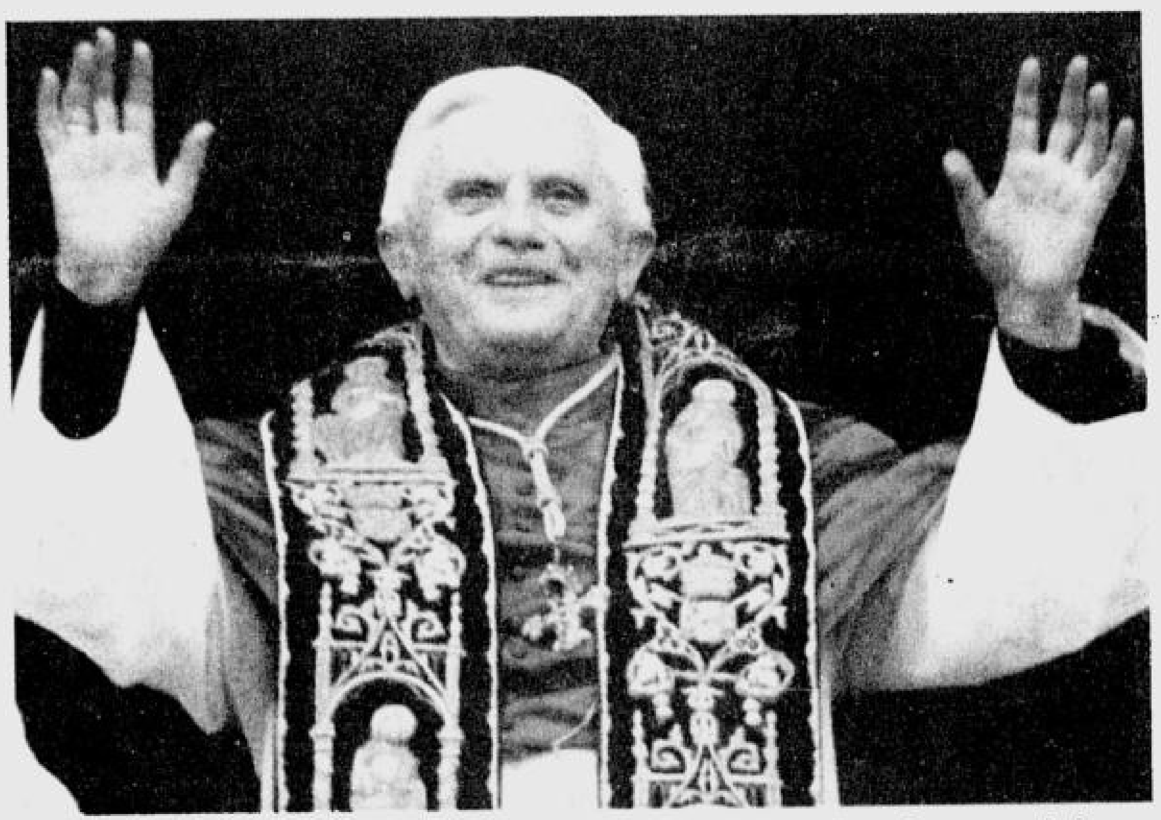

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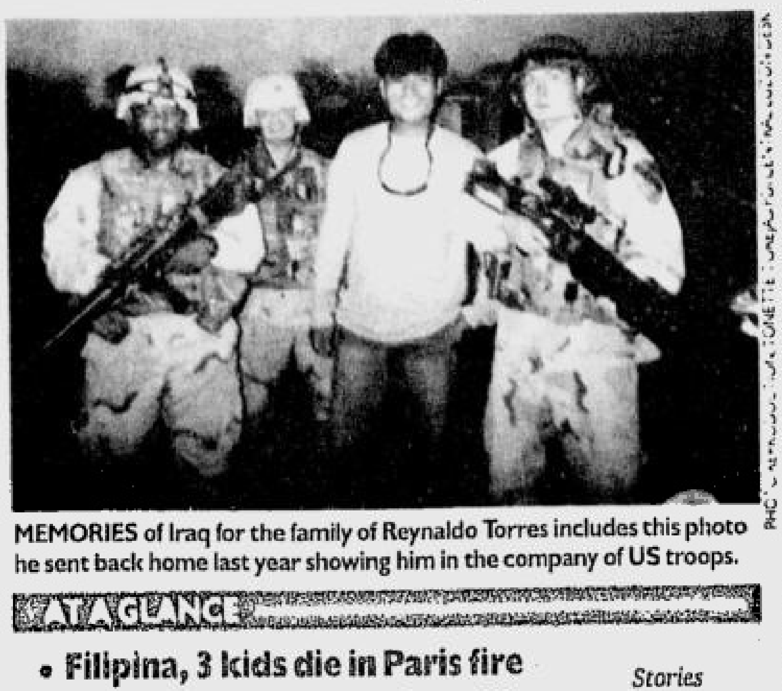

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao, Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/04/20/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bicam agrees on single VAT rate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE CONGRESSIONAL bicameral conference committee yesterday agreed to set a single rate for the proposed new value-added tax but left the divisive question of how much the final rate would be for future meetings.

But committee members rejected House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.'s suggestion that an 11 percent VAT was the emerging compromise.

"The Speaker is not a member of the bicam so I think that is speculation," said Tarlac Rep. Jeli Lapus who heads the House panel.

The adoption of a single rate was the third agreement reached by the committee in two days of formal meetings.

On Monday, the committee agreed on just two items—setting a 3-percent minimum VAT payment on capital goods and spreading the input tax on such goods over five years—seen to bring in about P38 billion in revenues.

Emerging from the meeting yesterday, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said he was happy not just with the agreement on a single VAT rate but with the progress of the bicam itself.

"A single rate is something that we want, it's administratively easy to implement. The next question now is what rate and that would be the topic next time," Purisima said.

The meeting was suspended at 2 p.m. so the legislators could attend the joint Congress session for visiting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf at 4 p.m.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the meeting would resume on Thursday which would give the panel enough time to "sleep on it."

Recto likened the deliberations to the first indecisive ballot of the Vatican conclave to select the next Pope.

A little after 1 p.m., members of the House panel led by Lapus held a caucus outside the bicam room at the Westin Philippine Plaza while senators lingered in the hall.

When the meeting resumed 30 minutes later, Lapus announced that his panel had accepted the Senate proposal of a single VAT rate, "on condition that mitigating measures will be adopted."

'Getting closer'

A beaming Recto told reporters that the color of the smoke had changed, "no longer black, it is now gray."

He said the emerging version was "getting closer" to the Senate version which is for retaining the current single rate of 10 percent and for lifting the exemptions on power, petroleum, professionals and other previously exempted sectors, as well as raising the corporate income tax from 32 to 35 percent.

The original House version provides for an increase of VAT on some goods and services from 10 to 12 percent but imposes a multi-tiered rate on others. For power and petroleum, it seeks to impose a 4 percent VAT on the first year of implementation and 6 percent, 8 percent and 12 percent on the second, third and fourth years respectively.

The House version imposes a 4 percent VAT on mackerel and sardines, milk, refined sugar, cooking oil, packed noodles and generic medicine. This will be changed to one uniform rate, based on the agreement by Lapus' panel.

Recto and Sen. Joker Arroyo hailed the agreement on a single rate as a breakthrough.

Recto said the bicam would look for ways and means to "temper the impact on consumers," including the reduction of excise tax on socially sensitive fuel products.

The Senate version proposes to repeal the P13.5 billion franchise tax of power companies and slash P3 billion from the excise tax on petroleum products to "mitigate" the impact of the additional VAT on electricity and pump prices.

Sen. Serge Osmeña said the adoption of a single rate would make collection more efficient, "because if you have multi-tier rates there is a lot of cheating, the leakage is big and it's so difficult to audit."

"I'm very happy with the progress and I'm looking forward to the resumption of the bicam meetings and looking forward to the approval of the version that's acceptable to both Houses," said Purisima, who sits in on the bicam meetings as a resource person.

Looming deadlock

"What we need to do now is to get an agreement on whether it's going to be 10 or 12 percent and the good thing is we're moving, were taking up issues one at a time and the debates have been very meaningful and we look forward to the next session so that we can get a good VAT bill," Purisima said.

The bicam is far from resolving the sensitive issue of whether the VAT rate would be kept at 10 percent or increased to 12 percent.

Arroyo said the committee was in fact deadlocked on the issue which has been tossed about in the past two days.

"There is a looming deadlock because the Senate will never agree [to raise the rate]," Arroyo said.

Gov't, MILF panels in 'good mood,' but no accord seen

PORT DICKSON, Malaysia—Government and rebel negotiators meeting to end a decades-old Muslim separatist rebellion in the southern Philippines have not yet reached consensus on any points but "the mood is good," Malaysian organizers said Tuesday.

"They are trying to find out what they can come to terms with," a Malaysian official told AFP on the sidelines of the second day of talks at a resort in this port city south of Kuala Lumpur.

"Each side has presented their points and they are asking for more details and explanation. They have not reached any consensus on any of the points."

The three-day meeting is an exploratory start to what are expected to be tough negotiations between Manila and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) over territorial issues.

The 12,000-strong MILF has been waging a rebellion since 1978, demanding that Manila give it control over what it calls its "ancestral domain." This traditionally means the whole of Mindanao island, once ruled by a succession of Islamic sultanates until they were subdued by western powers who conquered the country.

The mineral-rich island makes up a third of the mainly Catholic Philippines and is home to the country's Muslim minority, who say they were dispossessed of their land after Spain and later the United States introduced the western concept of titling property.

The talks in Malaysia are focused on four elements—"territorial aspects, the concept of the domains, the natural resources and governance"—the official said.

"It'll take some time for them to come to terms," he told AFP. "The mood is good. Everybody is trying to establish a good rapport.

"This morning they met for about two hours and traded their points. They are now huddled in their own groups and will meet again late in the afternoon."

He said there were 20 delegates on each team, including officials, lawyers, historians and academics. The government team is led by President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief negotiator Silvestre Afable and the MILF delegation by Mohagher Iqbal, a member of the central committee.

Preliminary talks between the government and the MILF began on Jan. 7, 1997, and a ceasefire was agreed in 2003. Malaysia and several other Organization of the Islamic Conference states have provided a small group of ceasefire monitors.

The Malaysian official said there could be further technical meetings after this one, before the next phase of a formal conference leading to the signing of a peace agreement.

MILF leader Murad Ebrahim has said the group is prepared for extended negotiations but will not sign any peace deal that falls short of its aspiration for a "Moro homeland" in Mindanao.

More than 100,000 people are estimated to have died in the conflict in the past 27 years.

AFP

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Poll protest is not about money–Loren

FORMER senator Loren Legarda yesterday castigated Vice President Noli de Castro for reducing her election protest case before the Supreme Court into a "show me the color of [your] money" contest.

Legarda took offense at De Castro's motion asking the high court, sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, to require her to put down the money needed for a recount of the votes in the provinces covered by her protest against the vice president.

"It is not the job of De Castro and his lawyers to tell me how much I should raise to pay for the expenses of my election protest. That is the job of the Supreme Court," she said.

"What our people are seeing is that Noli and his lawyers are exhibiting a mind set of 'show me the color of your money,'" Legarda said in a press statement.

In an omnibus motion covering all aspects of Legarda's election protest, De Castro asked the PET to order Legarda to immediately post a cash deposit of at least P11.7 million as down payment for the P18.7 million estimated cost of the recount of votes in 22,800 questioned precincts.

He also asked PET to require Legarda to set the number of revision teams that would recount the election returns, fix the compensation of revisors and call a preliminary conference before the recount begins.

Romulo Macalintal, one of De Castro's lead counsels, said Legarda should likewise pay for the salaries of all 50 revisors, the PET's head revisor, as well De Castro's lawyers who would monitor their revisors. Each party is entitled to 25 revisors each.

Macalintal said the amounts quoted in their motion could still increase as these were based on the 1998 election protest filed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago against President Ramos.

Legarda is seeking a re-canvass of election returns in five provinces and nine municipalities involving 12,105 precincts, as well as a revision or recount of ballots in 39 provinces and five cities involving 124,400 precincts.

She initially identified Cebu, Pampanga and Maguindanao as provinces where massive fraud was committed and Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte and Surigao del Sur where "manifest electoral errors" were allegedly reported.

Cynthia Balana

Pag-Ibig to raise P5B in bonds for housing

THE PAG-IBIG Fund will float P5 billion in bonds to raise additional funds for the government's housing programs, Vice President Noli de Castro said yesterday.

De Castro, chair of Pag-Ibig Fund and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), said the fund had signed an underwriting agreement with the Development Bank of the Philippines and First Metro Investment Corp.

The bonds will have a fixed term of five years and one day and will carry a fixed maximum interest rate of 8.75 percent per year, payable semi-annually. The bond issue may be increased to a maximum of P7 billion, in case of oversubscription.

Pag-Ibig president Romero Quimbo said the bonds, which will be subject to regulatory approval, shall carry the following eligibilities: Alternative compliance with the Agri-Agra Law (Presidential Decree 717); sufficient compliance with Section 18 of the Urban Development Housing Act (Republic Act No. 7279), and admitted assets of insurance companies, as capital or reserve requirements.

Quimbo said he was confident the bond flotation would further reinforce the role Pag-Ibig plays in the development of the capital market.

To date, Pag-Ibig Fund has successfully floated P6 billion worth of housing bonds to fund its housing programs—P4 billion in 2000 and P2 billion in 2001.

"This gives credence to the fund's capacity to attract potential investors on the strength of our financial standing and ability to compete in the capital market. We trust that with the attractive features of the bonds, there will be wider participation from the private sector, especially since they provide a more competitive yield compared to other investment tools," Quimbo said.

Quimbo said the fund had increased anew its profitability, declaring a net income of P6.47 billion in 2004, which represented a 23 percent increase from the previous year's P5.26 billion.

It likewise declared P4.85 billion in dividends which will be credited to its more than five million members nationwide. *Cynthia D. Balana*

Ople seminar on diplomacy

THE BLAS F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute will hold a one-day seminar titled "Philippines Diplomacy in Action" on Friday at the Ople Institute, Marbella II Building, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

Speakers will include top Filipino diplomats and experts on overseas employment, the Middle East and global terrorism.

Bernardo Ople, younger brother of the late foreign affairs secretary and senior vice president of the Ople Institute, said the seminar would "enable more people to understand the importance of diplomacy in addressing major issues that affect the lives of all Filipinos."

Ambassador Jose A. Zaide, foreign affairs assistant secretary and author of the book "Bababa ba?", will share his experiences as a diplomat and impart his views on the relevance of diplomacy in the lives of Filipinos. Labor attaché Allan Timbyan will deliver a lecture on "The Role of a Labor Attaché."

Writer and diplomat Carlos Sorreta, special assistant to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, will deliver a lecture on "The 8 Realities of the Philippines' Foreign Policy."

Also slated to speak are Undersecretary Jess Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (on RP-US relations), and former Ambassador to Iraq Reynaldo Parungao ("Is the Middle East Ready for a Democratic Iraq?").

Undersecretary in the Office of the Executive Secretary Ric Blancaflor, director for public and legal affairs and spokesperson of the Antiterrorism Task Force, will deliver a lecture on "International Terrorism."

Bernardo Ople will give the opening remarks while Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Jose Brillantes has been invited to deliver the closing remarks and award certificates to the participants.

Those interested in attending the seminar can call the Ople Institute at tel. 339-1768/69.

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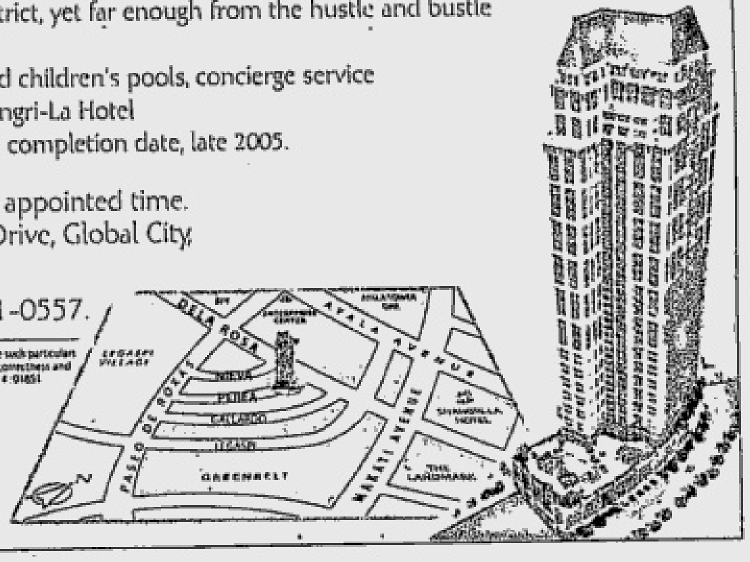

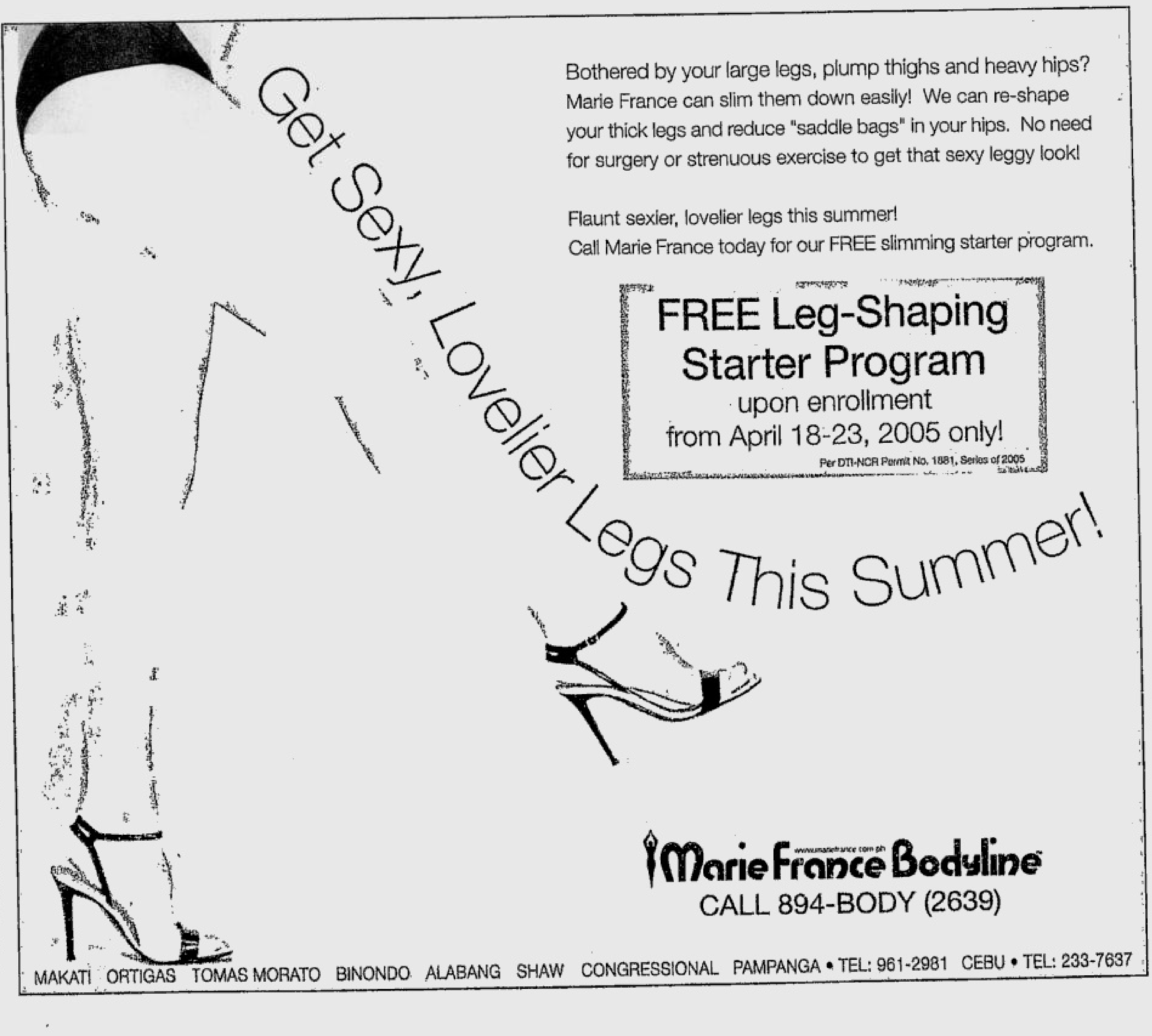
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Agri chief faces accuser in Senate hearing

By TJ Burgonio

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap came face to face with his accuser, resigned Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Evangeline Valbuena at the opening yesterday of the Senate inquiry into the controversial P8.4-billion hybrid coconut nursery project in Agusan del Sur.

Yap dismissed as a "yarn" Valbuena's expose of the government's plan to allegedly bankroll the Agusan del Sur project using the coconut levy funds.

"She takes snippets of facts and weaves her own tale and yarn of how she appreciates these facts," he said.

Yap said the issue had been blown out of proportion because Valbuena opted to go to the media, instead of holding consultations with agriculture officials and farmers' groups.

"That's the tragedy of the entire situation— facts taken out of context and woven to fit a particular person's understanding of what she wants to believe in," he said.

Valbuena last week accused the agriculture secretary of allegedly pushing for the project and pushing her out of the PCA when she refused to support it.

She resigned last week after only five months in office. Malacañang said she had been fired.

At the hearing called by the Senate committee on agriculture and food, Yap said the project was merely in the exploratory stages and has yet to be approved.

He said it was an offshoot of a November 2004 memorandum of understanding between the PCA, the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) oil mills group and the UCPB-CIIF Finance and Development Corp. (Cocofinance) to explore the possibility of jointly developing 110,000 hectares of the Agusan Valley into a coconut plantation.

"A task force has yet to be created and the staff work has not reached my office. So there's no project set for implementation to speak of. There's no P8.4 billion to speak of," said Yap.

He explained that before any project can be finalized, it has to be vetted and approved by the PCA board.

He said he had instructed Valbuena to sit down with CIIF officials to "find a common ground" on government projects.

But as Valbuena later admitted, she refused to attend the meeting as she thought it would involve the "dilution of coco levy funds."

At the hearing, Valbuena suddenly found herself on the defensive as she came under questioning from Sen. Aquilino Pimentel who wondered how she came to conclude that the coco levy funds would be diluted.

"There's a big gap between your impression and what would have happened in the meeting. Had you gone to the meeting, there would probably have been a different outcome," said Pimentel, who had called the inquiry with committee chair Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

Valbuena explained that the figure P8.4 billion was contained in a document that her predecessor Danilo Coronacion, a signatory to the MOU, sent to Akbayan party-list Rep. Rissa Hontiveros-Baraquel.

"It just boggles the mind to pour P8.4 billion into one site," she said.

But she failed to convince Pimentel, who said, "It looks like there's no final contract."

In her opening statement, Valbuena said that she opposed the project because of legal and technical impediments.

She pointed out that Presidential Decree 1768 of 1981, which reserved the Agusan area for hybrid coconut plantation and which was used as the basis for the project proposal, had been revoked by Executive Order 448 of 1991.

She said Agusan was not a suitable choice as a seed nut supply base because it was far from the coast where the supply of chloride was found.

At the hearing, Coronacion said no money had been spent on the preparatory work on the project.

"We had to undertake a study to determine with finality the feasibility of the area both from a legal and technical standpoint… Side by side, we could balance our replanting program with the opening of new areas and the initiatives that we had taken before," he said.

Also at the hearing were Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government; Leonardo Montemayor, president of the Federation of Free Farmers; UCPB president Jose Querubin and CIIF president Rolando Golez.

PRIVATE ARMIES

Army admits soldiers' wrongdoing in Abra

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

AFTER the Philippine National Police, the military is taking some flak in Abra.

The Philippine Army yesterday acknowledged reports that soldiers based in the province were involved in illegal activities.

An Army spokesperson said an investigation was under way into allegations that members of the 529-strong 41st Infantry Battalion were serving in the "private armies" of local politicians.

Last week, the Department of Interior and Local Government sacked the entire Abra provincial police force for serving as personal bodyguards to politicians for a fee.

Its Task Force Abra confirmed that Abra was in the grip of a "reign of terror" due to widespread lawlessness.

"The Army leadership will start an investigation on allegations that Army personnel based in Abra are being used by politicians and some influential groups as private armies," said Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Bacarro.

Bacarro said the investigating team would be led by Maj. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos, chief of the Army Inspector General's Office.

"The Army leadership is seriously bent on looking into the issue and take appropriate action if warranted," Bacarro said.

But last week, Army chief Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga dismissed the calls to reassign members of the 41st IB out of Abra.

Senga said he saw "no reason" to replace the soldiers and that the causes for the sacking of the PNP force in Abra did not apply to the Army troopers.

He also said he was not aware of any complaints against the soldiers there.

The former commander of the 41st IB, Lt. Col. Noel Mislang, is facing court-martial for allegedly ordering two of his men to assassinate Lagayan town Mayor Cecile Luna and her family allegedly upon orders of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera.

Valera has denied the allegation.

The two sergeants refused to carry out Mislang's order and one of them was later killed in an ambush.

Mislang was relieved of his command on Jan. 13 and replaced by Lt. Col. Angelito de Leon.

On Monday, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. told reporters he had not seen any recommendation to sack the 41st IB.

"I only read in the papers that there was such a request," Cruz said, adding that he would ask for a review of any such recommendation if it came across his desk.

High court suspends 'doubting' lawyer

THE SUPREME Court has suspended a lawyer from the practice of law "indefinitely" for doubting the authenticity of one of its minute resolutions because it did not bear the signatures of the SC justices concerned.

In a nine-page resolution, the high court suspended lawyer Francisco C. Cruz for saying in a pleading before the SC that "something is indeed amiss" in the absence of signatures in a 2004 resolution where the court denied the motion for reconsideration sought by Cruz in a case he was representing.

In his pleading titled "A Practicing Lawyer's Plaint," Cruz had said, "There is a lot of corruption going around involving… justices."

As the guardian of the legal profession, the SC said it had "plenary disciplinary authority" over the members of the bar.

"Where a (lawyer's) conduct is contumacious, it constitutes professional misconduct calling into play this court's disciplinary authority," the court said in its resolution dated April 7.

It said Cruz's statement constituted direct contempt of court since it was "equivalent to a misbehavior." *Armand N. Nocum*

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Filipina, family die in Paris hotel fire

By Nikko Dizon

A FILIPINO and her family were among those killed in the fire that gutted a Paris hotel last week, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday.

Ambassador Hector Villaroel of the Philippine Embassy in Paris identified the fatalities as Maira Padayao of Balindong, Lanao del Sur, her Sri Lankan husband Rajpakseo Pisarage and their two children aged four years and 22 months.

Padayao was a member of the Filipino Muslim community in France. The association's president, Mat Ara, was identified as Padayao's closest relative in Paris, the DFA said.

Villaroel said Padayao's brother, who lives in Lebak, Sultan Kudarat, had been informed of her death.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo directed the Philippine Embassy in Paris to have a consular representative accompany Ara to the morgue at the Institut Medical Legal in the city to confirm Padayao's identity.

Authorities said that 23 people, half of them children, died in the fire that gutted the six-story Paris Opera Hotel in Central Paris on April 15.

A woman relative of the hotel's night watchman has admitted setting off the blaze accidentally.

The hotel was frequented by tourists and immigrants and was reportedly overcrowded at the time of the fire. *With an AFP report*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 20, 2005
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 12:24-13:5
Gospel: John 12:44-50

Jesus had said, and even cried out, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me, sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

"If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I am not the one to condemn him; for I have come, not to condemn the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me, and does not receive my word, already has a judge: the very word I have spoken will condemn him on the last day.

"For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has instructed me in what to say and how to speak. I know that his commandment is eternal life, and that is why the message I give, I give as the Father instructed me."

Commentary

These words of Jesus, though spoken now in Easter are some of the last words Jesus speaks in public before the Last Supper, calling out for those who are hearing his words, but not listening to him, or obeying him to respond. He is crying out that he is the light and he is with us in the world so that we do not remain in darkness. If we hear his words, but do not keep them, then the Word convicts us. Jesus has been taught by God what to say and how to speak (the Spirit) and that God is life and all the teachings, all the commandments are about life—life for all, especially those most in need of it—life given in forgiveness and justice, in food and healing, in care and acceptance, life ever more abundant. And especially it is life in God—life that is shared by Jesus with us, in the power of the Spirit so that we might know God as Jesus knows the Father. Do we believe in the one that sent Jesus, the Father? Do we live in his light, according to his Word?

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Filipino stabbed dead in Beijing

A FILIPINO was stabbed to death yesterday while on a tour of China with his family, the foreign affairs department said yesterday.

The victim, Eduardo Madrigal, was stabbed at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the Chinese capital.

He was reportedly with his wife, Vivian, and three daughters.

Authorities have arrested Madrigal's assailant but there was as yet no clear motive for the attack, DFA spokesperson Gilbert Asuque said.

Asuque said the Philippine Embassy in China was "aware" of the incident but could give no further details.

"The victim's family said they would be the ones to give a statement on the incident," Asuque said.

He said Madrigal's brother was already on his way to China. *Nikko Dizon*

GMA: RP hands off Burma issue

By Christine O. Avendaño

DON'T count on the President to move against Burma's (Myanmar) assumption of the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations next year.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she thought it would be improper for the Philippines to take such an initiative because the country stood to benefit from the outcome.

"It would be imprudent for the Philippines because if (Burma) loses the chairmanship we [will be] the chairman," the President said at a news conference in Malacañang.

She was referring to the fact that Manila was expected to take the chairmanship of Asean, the regional grouping to which it belongs along with Burma, in the event the latter did not assume the top post.

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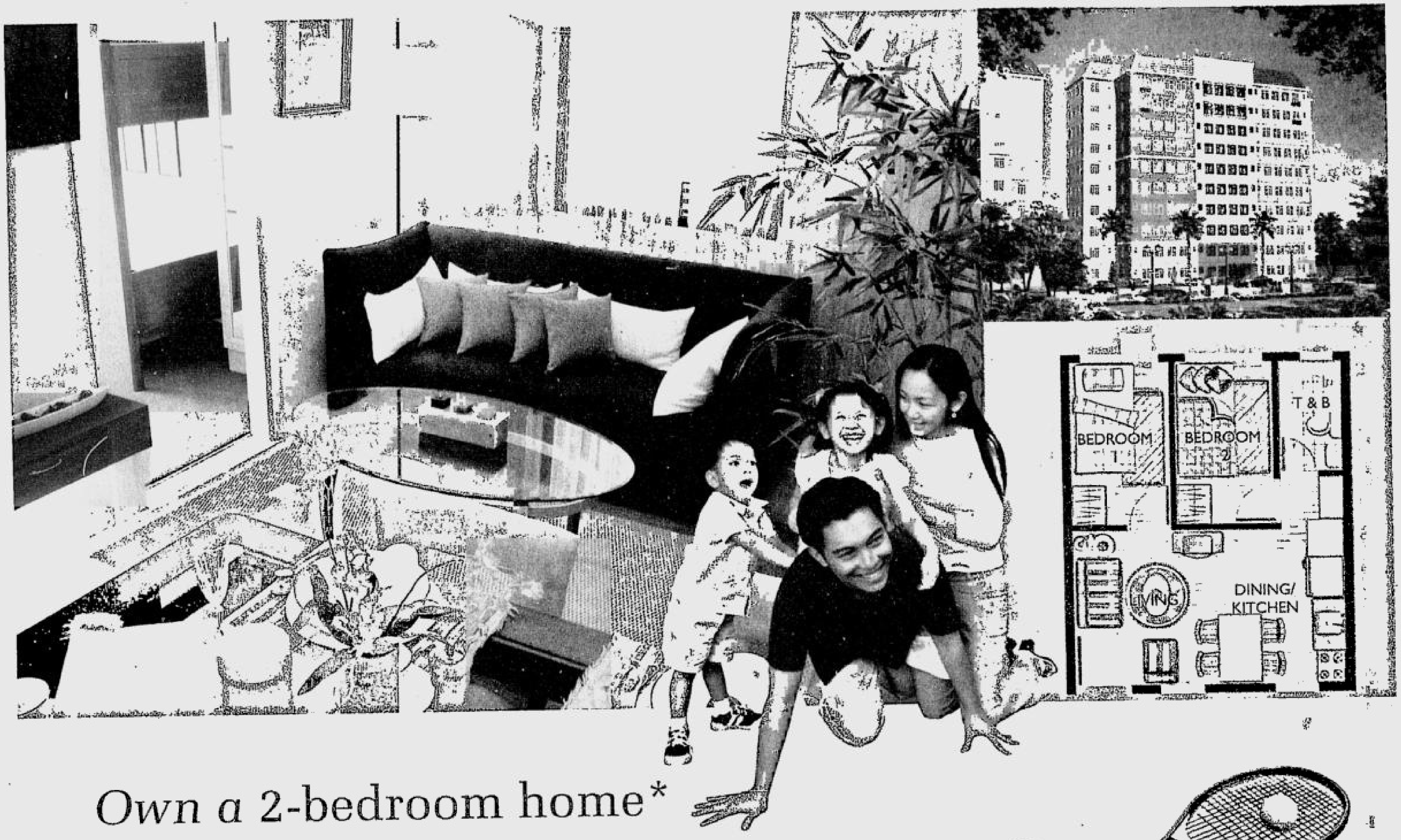
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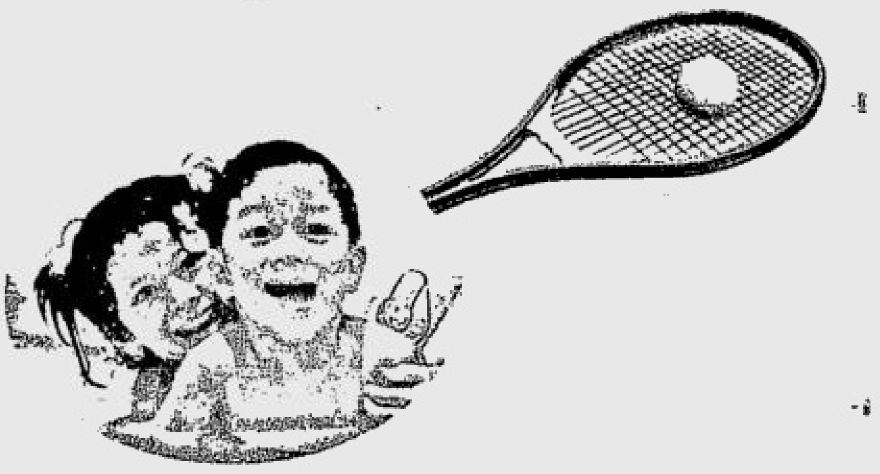

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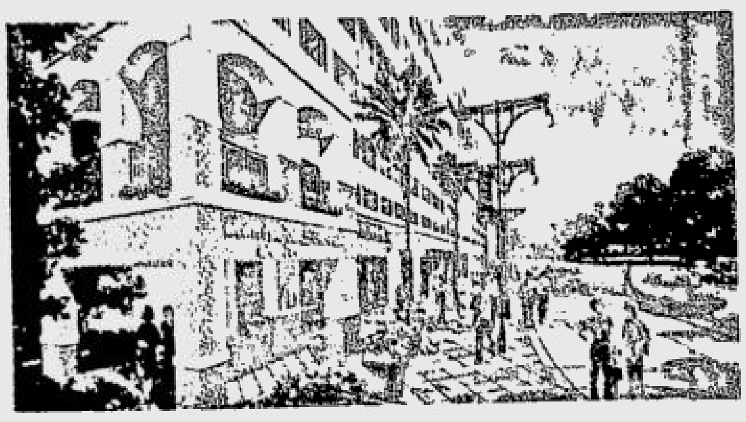

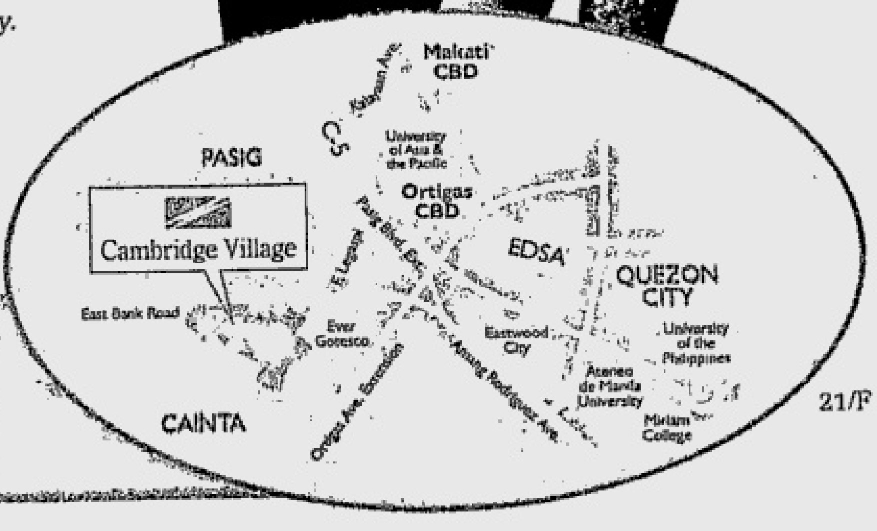
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He stepped out of US military camp to buy ring tone

By Nikko Dizon
and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

REY TORRES went out of a protected US military camp to buy a ring tone for his cellular phone. He paid for it with his life.

The Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday gave an account of the circumstances of Torres' death based, it said, on information supplied by his employers.

Torres, a 32-year-old father of five, was killed April 17 when armed men fired on the vehicle he was driving in downtown Baghdad, according to reports obtained by Philippine Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Ricardo Endaya.

The diplomat was able to piece together the circumstances surrounding Torres' death with the help of his employer, Ahmad Al-Khatib, general manager of Qatar International Trading (QTI), the DFA said in a press release.

At around 6 p.m. (Iraq time), Torres left his work site, saying he would be going to the mess hall inside the camp, according to the account.

However, "without permission" from the company's manager, he and an Egyptian co-worker drove to Iraq's Amiriyah District using a company car to buy a ring tone for his mobile phone, the DFA release said.

The area is reportedly an insurgent-infested, middle-class neighborhood and the majority of its Sunni residents are former Iraqi army personnel known for their hostility to foreigners.

"It appears some insurgents spotted Mr. Torres and chased the vehicle up until the airport road, where several rounds of ammunition were fired, killing the Filipino on the spot," the DFA release said.

His companion survived.

The Egyptian national is still in a state of shock and is undergoing treatment, and would be interrogated by the US military police at the proper time, Endaya was told, according to the DFA.

Torres' employer has given assurances that his family will be given the appropriate financial assistance, Endaya said.

In San Fernando City, Pampanga, Torres' mother recounted how a desire to provide for his family drove her son to work in a dangerous place like Iraq.

"I begged him not to leave. But he was confident that God would take care of him," said Torres' grief-stricken 52-year-old mother Norma. "He put his life on the line for us."

The Torres home in Purok 8, a squatter community, is a tapestry of salvaged materials and shacks, reflecting the poverty that Torres had wanted to escape.

The third child and the eldest son in a brood of seven, Torres took on the burden of being the breadwinner after his father died 10 years ago.

Torres, who finished high school, had worked variously as a janitor, security guard and driver, his mother said.

Torres left behind a wife, Gloria, and five children, the eldest 14 and the youngest 2.

Norma said her son called on her birthday earlier this month to say that, on his return home in December when his contract expired, he would buy her a new set of earrings.

Torres had helped his ailing mother put up a variety store to raise money for her medicine. He helped his brothers and sisters pay their electricity and water bills, although they had families of their own.

Torres' wife went the rounds of government offices on Tuesday to get documents required for insurance claims. His eldest son, Jerome, went to Angeles City to borrow money from an aunt.

Torres earned P25,000 monthly but had not been able to send money home recently.

Jerome's four siblings shared a medium-sized tilapia for lunch on Tuesday.

Socorro Castro, officer in charge of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration here, said Torres' stint in Iraq was legal.

Thus, his family is qualified to receive P200,000 in insurance benefits and P20,000 for burial assistance, she said.

Torres was the fifth Kapampangan killed in conflict-torn countries since 2002.

Another Filipino in a week's time dies in Iraq

From page A1

Endaya said the incident occurred while Salazar was driving a US military vehicle, known as an "M114," along the MSR Tampa, a road that connects Baghdad to Southern Iraq and is used exclusively by US and coalition forces.

Salazar's body bore no gunshot wounds, he said. The information Endaya received was that death was caused by "lacerated lungs and head trauma."

The report did not say what had caused the injuries.

Salazar's remains are now at the Camp Victory morgue.

The 46-year-old Salazar was a native of Cebu City, the DFA statement said.

Not reported earlier

Explaining why Salazar's death was not reported earlier, foreign affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said information was difficult to obtain in Iraq.

He said it had not been easy even for Endaya to travel from the embassy office to different locations in Iraq to verify or acquire information because of sporadic firefights and mortar attacks.

Unlike in the case of Torres, whose death was immediately related by his employer to the Philippine Embassy, "it was only now that US authorities informed our embassy that a Filipino worker [Salazar] had died."

The office of the DFA Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs (OUMWA) has coordinated with the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (Owwa) and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to inform Salazar's next-of-kin in his hometown and extend them the assistance they would need.

Worry over OFWs

Condoling with the families of the slain OFWs, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo also said the government had become increasingly worried about the safety of Filipino workers in Iraq.

Days between the deaths of Salazar and Torres, five OFWs survived an ambush by armed men along a dangerous road leading to the Baghdad International Airport. Two of them, Francisco Luz and Sherylynn Fontanilla, sustained gunshot wounds.

"In this light, I urgently convey to all the OFWs in Iraq the serious concern and apprehension of the government over the extremely dangerous situation in that country," Romulo said in a statement.

"The threat to their safety and their lives remains critical, making the option of voluntarily coming home to the Philippines and perhaps seek employment elsewhere more crucial," Romulo said.

Another Filipino worker, Robert Tarongoy, remains in the hands of his Iraqi abductors.

Asuque said the DFA was not yet considering a forced repatriation of the estimated 5,000-6,000 OFWs in Iraq, citing the existing contracts the OFWs had with their employers.

The government has prohibited the deployment of Filipino workers in Iraq, but many have skirted or tried to skirt the ban.

"The contract is between them and their employer. The case would be different if the government, for example POEA, is a party in the contract," Asuque said.

Romulo urged OFWs to regularly refer to the "Security Manual for OFWs in Iraq" to guide them in their stay in the war-torn country. The manual outlines security measures, security levels and contingency plans for OFWs in Iraq.

Free transport home

The government has offered free transport home to Filipino workers in Iraq.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the foreign and labor departments "stand ready to help to facilitate the repatriation" of Filipinos who volunteer to leave the country.

The Philippines banned the deployment of Filipino workers in Iraq following the abduction in July 2004 of truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

Administrator Rosalinda Baldoz of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration said penalizing employment agencies sending Filipinos to Iraq would be possible if there were complaints filed against them.

"There should be documentation. There should be due process," she said.

High salary offers

Baldoz said it might be difficult to find complainants.

"It's difficult to stop them working in Iraq, especially if the salary is triple than what they are earning here. That's the problem," she said in a phone interview.

Baldoz also said cases of contract substitution—where Filipinos are supposed to go to another country but their contract is changed so that they could work in Iraq—were not automatically sanctioned.

"We look into it if the second contract is inferior to the first contract," she said.

No benefits

Four of the five OFWs who arrived here on Monday would not be receiving benefits from Owwa.

Marianito Roque, chief of Owwa, said only Francisco Luz, who was wounded by heavy gunfire, was registered with his office and would thus be entitled to benefits.

Nevertheless, said Roque, the Owwa would see to it that all five OFWs get home safely to their families. *With report from Leila B. Salaverria. AFP*

'Muslims, be loyal part of RP'

From page A1

combat Islamic militants.

Observer status in OIC

Musharraf, who was given a red carpet welcome at the Palace, expressed full support for the Philippine government's efforts to forge a peace pact with the 12,000-strong MILF.

"Let me assure you, Madam President, that you will find Pakistan on your side. We believe in harmony, we believe in the peaceful resolution," he said.

Musharraf also said Pakistan would support the Philippine bid for permanent observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which is scheduled to meet in June this year.

At a press conference following the meeting with Musharraf, Ms Arroyo said National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales would meet with officials of the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan to exchange information "very important in the world of international terrorism."

Gonzales is tentatively scheduled to meet in June with officials of ISI, which has been tracking down key operatives of the Taliban after the hardline Islamic group was toppled from power in Afghanistan by US-led forces in 2001.

Pakistan abandoned the Taliban in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. The Taliban had sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, which carried out the attacks.

Key al-Qaida suspects are believed to have once used Mindanao as a training base. In 1995, Philippine and US intelligence operatives foiled a plot by militant Ramzi Yousef to blow up American airliners from Manila.

Yousef, who was arrested in Pakistan, is serving a lengthy prison sentence in the United States for the 1993 bombing of New York's World Trade Center.

Ms Arroyo said both countries would help each other in promoting interfaith dialogue to moderate the teachings in Muslim schools.

"He (Musharaff) believes as much as I do that when we fight terrorism, there is the military aspect and then there's the socio-cultural aspect," Ms Arroyo said.

The President ordered Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to discuss with his Pakistani counterpart how to tighten cooperation between the two countries in this area.

The initiatives were contained in a memorandum of understanding signed by Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan.

On other matters, the Philippines and Pakistan agreed to abolish visa requirements for diplomats and facilitate the issuance of entry visas, step up cultural exchanges between the two nations, and sign a trade deal that would bring cheap medicine from Pakistan to the Philippines.

Extremism has no religion

Addressing the joint session of Congress, Musharraf brought a message of peace when he said that "people everywhere value freedom."

He pushed for "harmony and moderation" between civilizations and faiths as he called on Ms Arroyo and Filipino leaders to add their moral voice to help resolve issues that divide nations.

"We must reject the false notion of a clash of civilizations, especially conflict between Islam and the West. Terrorism or extremism has no religion," he said, eliciting loud applause from the members of Congress.

Wishing the peace process success, he said his country would help in any way to bring about lasting peace and stability in troubled Mindanao, with the support of the OIC.

In an ambush interview after his speech, he said: "Yes, we agreed [on] formulating a new restructured OIC and within that we will certainly give a very supportive bent toward the demand of the Philippines."

Medal

The 28-minute speech, which started at 4:12 p.m., was interrupted 22 times by applause. It focused on terrorism, democracy, the role of Pakistan in regional stability, women empowerment, private sector participation in economic progress and poverty alleviation.

He started and ended his speech with a salute to the members of Congress.

Before his address, Musharraf was conferred the Congressional Medal of Achievement by Speaker Jose de Venecia, Senate President Franklin Drilon and House leaders in a simple ceremony in the House Presidential Legislative-Liaison Office.

De Venecia said the award was bestowed on behalf of the Filipino nation and in accordance with House Resolution No. 453 in "recognition of his pivotal role in strengthening democracy, representative democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan."

Musharraf, who ruled his country with an iron fist from 1991 until he transferred the powers of the chief executive to an elected prime minister in 2002, said he envisioned Pakistan as a "modern and moderate Islamic state."

Free from IMF

But for Pakistan to emerge as a "stable, peaceful, progressive, dynamic and moderate Islamic country," Musharraf acknowledged the need to maintain peace in and outside his country.

In carefully crafted diplomatic terms, he acknowledged that only a democratic rule free from the scourge of oppression and terrorism could achieve economic progress.

His statement on Pakistan's independence from the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) elicited the loudest applause from the members of Congress.

"Following a proper fiscal management, we are, for the first time, no longer dependent on the IMF. All macro economic indicators are positive and for the first time poverty and joblessness are on the decline," he said.

"We appreciate the initiatives of President Musharraf on working together in confronting the manifold threats and challenges brought about by an ever changing world," Ms Arroyo said in her toast to Musharraf at a state dinner last night.

Musharraf will fly to Indonesia on Wednesday after his three-day state visit in the Philippines. *With a report from AFP*

GMA tells public: Buy Petron products

From page A1

raised its prices the past few weeks.

"We have been looking at crude prices and have observed a softening over the past 10 days. Because of this, we see no immediate need to increase prices. We will hold off any increase as long as we can," Petron public affairs manager Virginia Ruivivar said.

Over the weekend, private oil firms raised the prices of gasoline and diesel by 75 centavos a liter and the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by 75 centavos a kilogram.

Officials of oil firms may face two-year prison sentences if they refuse to explain to the DOE by 5 p.m. today why they raised fuel prices by 75 centavos a liter over the weekend despite dropping world oil prices.

Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya said the DOE yesterday sent another letter to the oil firms, seeking an explanation for the price increases, as the first letter went unheeded.

He said Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had asked oil companies, through a letter sent Monday, to explain under oath their latest price increases, which came at a time when world prices had gone down by more than 10 percent from all-time highs.

Special attention, he said, was placed on the 75-centavo-a-liter price increase over the weekend as this digressed from the 50-centavo-a-liter pattern that the oil companies had been following for the past several weeks.

It was the seventh gasoline price hike since the beginning of the year, resulting in a cumulative increase of P3.85 a liter. For diesel, it was the eighth price increase, bringing the cumulative price hike to P4.05 a liter.

LPG prices have risen thrice, or by a total of P2.15 a kilogram, since January.

P32 a liter for gasoline

Data from the Department of Energy show that pump prices of unleaded gasoline now range from P30.65 to P32.08 a liter, while diesel is being retailed at between P25.70 and P27.65 a liter.

Prices of LPG now range from P356 to P420 for an 11-kilogram cylinder.

Several jeepney groups staged the strike to protest the series of oil price increases.

Responding to the strike, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, after meeting with transport leaders on Monday, said the government would likely grant the petition for a P2.50 increase in the minimum jeepney fare by the first week of May.

Second letter

Abaya said the second letter pointed out to the oil firms a provision in Republic Act No. 8479, or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998, which says that non-compliance with reportorial requirements or any order from the energy secretary was punishable by two years in prison and a fine of between P250,000 and P500,000.

Chapter 3, Section 12 of the Oil Deregulation Law enumerates requirements that oil firms have to comply with, including submission of any reportorial requirements, use of clean and safe (environment and worker-benign) technologies, response to any order of the energy secretary, and registration of any fuel additive with the DOE prior to its use as an additive.

"We ask that this request not be ignored," Abaya said.

Missing the point

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said the government missed the point of the successful transport strike that hit Metro Manila and other urban centers on Monday, saying the proposed fare hike will ultimately benefit the oil companies.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said an increase in public transport fares would not be enough to cover the cost of maintaining a jeepney franchise because of the continued increase in oil prices.

"With oil prices still going up, the fare hike will simply go to the oil monopolies. The transport sector will still suffer (and) the commuters, even more," Reyes said in an interview.

He said the scrapping of the Oil Deregulation Law and the nationalization of the oil industry were the solutions to the crisis.

Special powers for GMA

In the House of Representatives, calls to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law yesterday received bipartisan support.

The congressional leaders also favored granting "special powers" to President Macapagal-Arroyo to deal with the looming oil crisis.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles joined the move led by Minority Leader Francis Escudero and militant party-list lawmakers to review the Oil Deregulation Law.

Escudero said the Oil Deregulation Law, which allows oil firms to raise prices without seeking government approval, should be reexamined to give government greater flexibility in setting fuel prices.

"We can't blame the government. But government should at the very least try to do something. They're raising the white flag already. We can't throw in the towel just yet," said Escudero.

Non-Opec countries

Escudero suggested a new law that would require oil companies to buy from non-Opec (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) members such as Russia and China, which sell oil at a more "reasonable rate."

Stockpile oil reserves

He also suggested that government stockpile oil reserves to be sold to local oil firms when the prices in the world market became too prohibitive.

Nograles said he was amenable to the proposal of Escudero for Congress to give additional powers to the executive to rein in oil prices.

He said Congress should return to the government the power to intervene in the pricing of oil as he noted that a deregulated regime had opened opportunities for abuse by the three big oil companies.

Acceptable option

The House majority leader said Shell, Caltex and Petron had been acting like a cartel.

"The purpose of legislating the oil deregulation law was to encourage all companies to offer more acceptable options to the consumers. But instead of protecting the consumers, the law has become a tool of aggression by these oil firms," Nograles said.

Party-list groups Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis have been seeking the repeal of the Oil Deregulation Law since the 12th Congress.

Asian-African summit

At the press conference in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo said she would ask world leaders to look for a solution to the high oil prices at the Asian-African summit in Jakarta this week.

The summit will be held from April 21 to 23.

The President said "really very steep" prices were having a "tremendous" and "negative" impact on developing countries like the Philippines. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

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HAPPY B-DAY PANGULONG Joseph Estrada "ERAP"

WAITING to greet their idol a happy birthday are well-wishers outside the Tanay estate of former President Joseph Estrada on Tuesday. Only invited guests were allowed inside the compound to party with Estrada on his 68th birthday. JOAN BONDOC

From page A1

"Soft drinks *lang nakita ko* (I only saw soft drinks). It was a simple gathering in a relaxed atmosphere, just like a weekend with family and friends," Estrada's spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Estrada also looked happier, Dilangalen said, because his arthritic knees—which had given him so much pain in the past—were much better after his surgery in Hong Kong.

"*May kaunting kirot* (they're a bit painful), but definitely better than before the operation," Dilangalen said.

"He was happy to see family and friends," he added. His former Cabinet secretaries also came to see him.

Known for his lavish parties that lasted till the early morning, Estrada marked his 68th birthday with a party that was considered modest.

Among his earliest well-wishers were residents around his 21-hectare Tanay estate who flocked to the gate as early as 7 a.m. and were rewarded when Estrada himself appeared at the gate to thank them for coming.

Estrada also distributed birthday bags which contained two kilos of rice, sugar, coffee, noodles and canned goods to faithful followers who had formed a crowd outside the gate.

Friends started arriving as early as 8 a.m. But the celebrities and politicians arrived in their Expeditions at 3 p.m.

Admirers from San Juan

A busload of Estrada followers from San Juan arrived at 4 p.m., unfurled banners extolling the detainee as the "true president and father of the common folk."

When told that they could not enter because they were not on the guest list, Estrada followers started singing "Happy Birthday" while waving a huge red banner of the People's Movement Against Poverty.

Estrada is accused of amassing about P4 billion in illegal gambling payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed in secret bank accounts. The antigraft court has ordered him to remain within the grounds of his Tanay property while his case is being heard, but allows him to occasionally receive visitors.

Chief prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio objected to Estrada's birthday bash, arguing he should be transferred to a conventional detention center.

"He should not even be there and holding a party on a 21-hectare property that is so huge and difficult to secure. We believe there is no legal basis to allow him to stay in a resort," Villa-Ignacio told the judges of the antigraft court Monday.

Party hours longer

Nevertheless, the Sandiganbayan yesterday modified the duration of Estrada's birthday bash at his Tanay, Rizal, resthouse, changing the "party hours" from 8 a.m.—8 p.m. to 3 p.m.—11 p.m.

The special division hearing Estrada's plunder case granted the urgent motion to change the party hours filed by the former president's lawyers because "many of the guests could not leave their work or commitments early enough to celebrate with the principal accused."

The antigraft court granted the resolution after the PNP, through police security and protection office head Chief Supt. Edgardo Doromal, posed no objection to the defendant's request "provided that only those whose names are in the guest list shall be allowed entry."

Wilfredo Majaducon, 68, an Estrada loyalist who religiously attends the Sandiganbayan hearings, was disappointed to learn this.

Willing to wait

"*Maghihintay kami hangga't kaya namin* (We will wait as long as possible)," Majaducon said in Pilipino.

A resident of Quezon City, Majaducon arrived at midday outside the Tanay resthouse with neighbors Amparo Cuballo, Alicia Ragas and Encarnacion Silvano.

"They were not very strict last year," Majaducon said. "They even allowed us to enter the camp."

Estrada was detained at a bungalow inside Camp Capinpin, also in Tanay, Rizal, before he was allowed to move to his resthouse outside the camp perimeter.

GMA's birthday wishes

President Macapagal-Arroyo said she wished Estrada "good health and peace of mind."

The President said she had no plans to change her policy of giving "humane treatment" to Estrada even after the jailed leader roused the opposition to continue the failed electoral protest of his friend, the late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"I can assure him justice and fair play and, within my own powers as I have been doing, the most humane treatment for his personal circumstances in deference to the many people who care for him and see in his situation the mirror of their situation," said Ms Arroyo in a press conference yesterday.

Change of heart

Just a few days ago, the President had nothing to say to Estrada for his birthday. Her change of heart came in the wake of a once-divided opposition that converged around Poe's widow, Susan Roces, as its "symbol" and "inspiration."

Roces questioned the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration in her first press conference since Poe died of a stroke. *With reports from AP and AFP*

STATEMENT OF THE

GENERALS FOR THE CONSTITUTION
(GENCON)

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE PAYMENT OF THE P12 BILLION AFP RETIREES' PENSION

We, the Generals for the Constitution (GENCON), support our fellow retirees in the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their claim for the payment and release of the long overdue P12 billion pensions and benefits as provided for under Republic Act 7696; RA 9166; executive order 219, executive order 22 and PD 1638, among others.

Likewise we sympathize with their beneficiaries whose already impoverished condition is aggravated further by the non-payment of the pension and other benefits.

We call on our fellow soldiers in the active duty to support the appeal of AFP retirees with the hope that they will not suffer the same fate in their retirement.

Furthermore, we stand united with the Young Enlisted Soldiers with Active and Retired Military (YES ARM) against the refusal of the Arroyo Administration to address the problem of the retirees;

Also, we support the Federation of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (FORCES) in their efforts to exhaust the legal processes to obtain justice for the retirees.

Yes, we condemn the Arroyo administration for continuously failing to settle and satisfy legitimate, lawful, and long neglected claims of the AFP retirees.

We denounce this administration for the unabated and massive corruption and unrestrained extravagance and profligate expenditure of public funds notwithstanding its admission that the country is in financial crisis that can only be buttressed by the passage of the 12% EVAT and other revenue generating schemes including the sale of military camps.

Finally, we appeal to our fellow retirees to unite with the rest of the Filipino people to voice our individual, collective and God given inalienable right as a sovereign people to resist actively with all the rights and power under our control and disposal to arrest the national malaise that now plagues our dear and only country.

BRIG. GEN JAIME C. ECHEVERRIA AFP (Ret.)
Chairman, GENCON

COMMO. ISMAEL D. APARRI AFP (Ret.)
Chairman, YES ARM

BRIG. GEN. ANGEL SADANG AFP (Ret.)
Spokesperson

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BCDA to sell generals' homes

From page A1

BCDA is authorized by law to convert former military base lands in Metro Manila to productive civilian use.

The law (RA 7227, enacted in 1992) also states that 32.5 percent of the proceeds should be used for "the transfer of the AFP military camps and the construction of new camps, the self-reliance and modernization program of the AFP, the concessional and long-term housing loan assistance and livelihood assistance to AFP officers and enlisted men and their families, and the rehabilitation and expansion of the AFP medical facilities."

Based on the previous valuation, the Jusmag and Novai areas could bring in at least P18.4 billion in revenues for the government.

No proclamation

Last November, BCDA president and chief executive Narciso L. Abaya lauded Sen. Franklin Drilon for testifying in court that when he was executive secretary of then President Corazon Aquino, he did not sign any proclamation authorizing the disposition of 47.5 hectares in Fort Bonifacio to Novai.

Novai officials led by retired Navy Comm. Eduardo Domingo had insisted that such a proclamation allowed the group's members to acquire the land.

Abaya, a retired Army general and former AFP chief of staff, said the Novai property could bring in P10 billion in revenues, P3.5. billion of which would go to the military's modernization program.

In a case he lodged at the Supreme Court during his term as AFP chief, Abaya accused the SHAI members of "squatting" on the Jusmag property.

Officers' wives

It was the wives of the officers occupying the AFP quarters in the 40-hectare Jusmag area who formed the SHAI on April 29, 1991.

On Oct. 30, 1991, the SHAI was able to secure a title to 35.5 hectares in its name from the Register of Deeds of Pasig City, on the basis of an alleged deed of sale.

The price indicated in the deed of sale was P11 million, or P30 per square meter.

On the instruction of then President Fidel Ramos, the government filed a complaint for the cancellation of the title and the recovery of the land. The case is now pending at the Supreme Court.

Among the SHAI members' husbands are former AFP chiefs Diomedio Villanueva, Roy Cimatu and Benjamin Defensor, and former Philippine National Police chief Edgardo Aglipay, earlier reports said.

Fast-food chains . . .

From page A1

the elderly, even a fitness area for customers.

Jollibee, McDonald's, KFC and other fast-food chains have finally heeded a year-long call to "reformulate" their menu to help Filipinos maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The Department of Health and the Philippine Coalition for the Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases welcomed the good news during a recent meeting with representatives from these restaurants.

"They said they would do it slowly," Health Undersecretary Ethylin Nieto told reporters in a media forum yesterday. "But it's good to hear that they are committed to doing this. We have to start somewhere. We are counting on them."

Apparently, food chains, especially those part of international conglomerates, cannot change their menus that easily. The slightest variation in taste, an added condiment, or the introduction of a new product often requires top-level approval.

Nieto said most of the food chains also promised to put up no-smoking signs or allocate smoking areas, at least, in compliance with the coalition's proposals.

Besides Jollibee, McDonald's and KFC, the campaign picked up commitments from A&W Restaurant, Goldilocks Bakeshop, Burger King, Red Ribbon, Texas Chicken, Tokyo-Tokyo, Tropical Hut, Sbarro, Burgoo, Wendy's and Mix Plant.

Since last year, the coalition had been asking fast-food chains to restrict the levels of saturated fats in their menu by shifting from animal fat to vegetable oils, to use low-caloric sweeteners, to limit salt content or use only iodized salts if they have to, and to keep meals "small" by doing away with "super" or "up" sizes.

The group had proposed that fast-food restaurants serve especially prepared food for pre-schoolers, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly and people with special dietary needs. They should also develop "affordable, healthy and nutritious food options, by serving whole grain food, fresh and pesticide-free vegetables and fruit dishes."

On top of a healthy menu, the coalition suggested that restaurants come up with "physical activity programs" for customers, including play and exercise areas in their respective outlets.

"We are more than ready for a scenario where fast-food chains will make money from serving healthy food and at the same time allow consumers to spend less on hospitalization," said Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit.

Fast-food chains became the focus of the campaign following a study showing that five out of 10 Filipinos patronized these restaurants.

Worse, Filipinos were eating less vegetables and fruit and were gobbling up more food high in fat, salt and sugar, according to Felicidad Velandria, supervising science research specialist of the National Nutrition and Health Survey.

So far, fast-food chains seemed to be complying—but in their own way. KFC, for example, introduced a salad line, prompting Jollibee to come up with its own.

The changes came probably as a result of constant prodding from health authorities.

In the forum, Velandria warned that if Filipinos do not change their unhealthy diet and lifestyle, 29,000 people would die from smoking, 14,000 from hypertension, 6,000 from obesity, 5,730 from abnormal cholesterol level and 4,148 from diabetes.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Diplomacy fails to end Japan-China row

BEIJING—Japan's foreign minister ended a tense visit to China on Tuesday without resolving the two neighbors' worst row in decades, as thousands of Japanese tourists canceled trips to China amid indications that the spat could hurt two of the world's most important economies.

Anti-Japanese demonstrations involving tens of thousands of sometimes-violent protesters have erupted in numerous Chinese cities in recent weeks over a government-approved Japanese textbook that critics say whitewash the country's wartime atrocities.

Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka, who departed China after a three-day visit, had sought an apology and compensation from China for damage during the riots. China balked and said Japan was to blame for the diplomatic spat and should be the one to apologize.

Beijing said it was considering Japan's proposal to have its prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, meet one-on-one with President Hu Jintao during a conference of Asian and African leaders in Indonesia. However, Koizumi said "if it's going to be the exchange of harsh words, it's better not to meet."

In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan encouraged Hu and Koizumi to sit down together to settle the fight.

The rhetoric and demonstrations have raised worries about the potential effect on the economic relationship between Asia's two biggest economies, which are linked by billions of dollars in trade and investment.

Japan's Trade Minister Shoichi Nakagawa said he doubted China could be trusted as a law-abiding nation.

"It is only natural for anyone to offer an apology and compensation if he or she damages other people's property," he said Tuesday. "When there is no response despite our request, we cannot help but doubt (China's) reliability as a state governed by the law."

"In a country where people believe they can do whatever they want in the name of patriotism, we cannot call it a law-abiding government," Nakagawa added.

The protesters have smashed windows of Japan's diplomatic missions and damaged Japanese restaurants. In Japan, Chinese diplomatic offices and other facilities linked to China also have been targeted in the past week in apparent retaliation.

The government-linked Chinese company that owns the Japanese Embassy in Beijing said last week it would repair the damage to the building but Japan declined the offer because it wants more comprehensive compensation, said Japanese Embassy spokesperson Ide Keiji.

On Tuesday, the head of Japan's National Public Safety Commission, Yoshitaka Murata, said he regretted the violence and vandalism in Japan—which included metal pellets fired at a Chinese school and paint smeared on the Chinese ambassador's residence—and pledged to try to stop it.

Japanese officials expressed worry over a plunge in travel to China. "Some damage to tourism cannot be avoided," Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa told a televised news conference in Tokyo.

All Nippon Airways Co. said it expected 12,000 passengers to cancel trips to China in April, while Japan Airlines said 5,500 travelers booked for China in April and May had already canceled.

Some analysts said Japanese companies weren't taking the anti-Japan sentiment and unrest seriously enough—a concern investors appeared to share.

Many Chinese are angry over what they consider Japan's failure to atone for its conquest of Asia and by the modern rivalry for energy resources and regional dominance. Street protests erupted after Japan approved the new history textbooks.

The books condense or omit references in earlier volumes to the Japanese military's germ warfare and sex slavery of Asian women. *AP*

Ratzinger dogged by Nazi link

VATICAN CITY—Accusations of involvement in kidnappings of priests in Argentina dog one papal contender. "Revelations" about Nazi links surface about another top candidate. Gossipy items about health problems raise doubts about others.

Among the "princes of the church" being targeted was German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, one of Pope John Paul II's most trusted aides and a man some Vatican watchers have put in pole position in the race to be pope.

Journalists have been poking around Ratzinger's teenage years during World War II, apparently searching for evidence of any pro-Nazi sentiment.

And on Friday, Argentine Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio was cited in a criminal complaint alleging involvement in the 1976 kidnappings of two fellow Jesuits during Argentina's dark years of military dictatorship. The cardinal's spokesperson called the allegation by a human rights lawyer "old slander."

The 78-year-old Bavarian prelate is the supposed favorite of cardinals leaning toward an elderly figure to lead the church for likely just a few years while churchmen try to absorb the legacy of John Paul's 26 years at the helm.

A Sunday Times of London profile on Ratzinger, saying his doctrinal watchdog role has earned him uncomplimentary nicknames like "God's rottweiler," reported on the cardinal's "brief membership" in the Hitler Youth movement and service, in the final stretch of World War II, in a German anti-aircraft unit. *AP*

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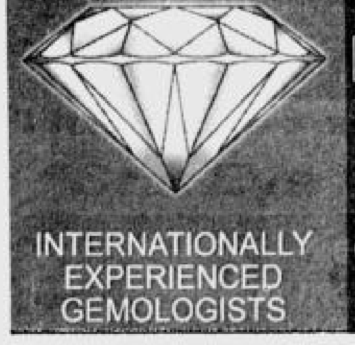

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Michael Jackson fooled the world, says mother of teenage accuser

SANTA MARIA, Calif.—The mother of Michael Jackson's teen accuser on Monday spent another day locked in a verbal tug-of-war with his lawyer, taking repeated pot shots at the singer and telling jurors that he had "fooled the world" with his professed love for children.

The woman, testifying for a fourth day in the 46-year-old entertainer's sensational child molestation trial, remained defiant in the face of a sustained assault on her credibility by Jackson's lead defense attorney Tom Mesereau.

But in one of the day's more bizarre admissions, she conceded she had once feared that her family would be spirited away from Jackson's Neverland ranch in a hot air balloon.

Though the mother never witnessed any molestation of her son by Jackson, she is a key witness in the trial and the linchpin of prosecution charges that Jackson conspired to hold her family against their will in February and March 2003.

The self-proclaimed King of Pop is charged with molesting the boy, then 13, at Neverland and conspiring to commit false imprisonment, child abduction and extortion. He faces more than two decades in prison if convicted.

"He really didn't care about children. He just cared about what he was doing with the children," the mother said of Jackson.

"He's managed to fool the world and I was just one woman inside of that. What he puts out to the world is not who he really is," she said. "Now because of this criminal case, people know who he really is."

Despite an objection by Mesereau, Santa Barbara Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville refused to strike those remarks from the record.

Mesereau spent much of the day trying to show jurors that the woman was a liar and a swindler, confronting her with conflicting versions of events or accounts that strained credibility.

"Did you tell the police that you thought your family might disappear from Neverland in a hot air balloon?" Mesereau asked at one point, citing an interview with sheriff's deputies.

The woman responded that Mesereau had taken her remark out of context and that two Jackson henchmen had threatened "various ways of making my children disappear"—including by hot air balloon. *Reuters*

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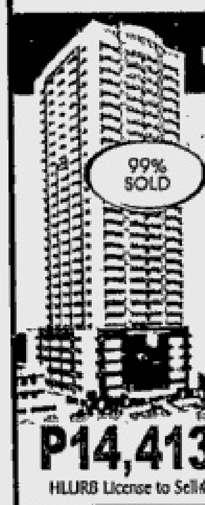

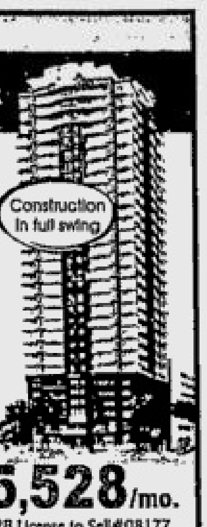

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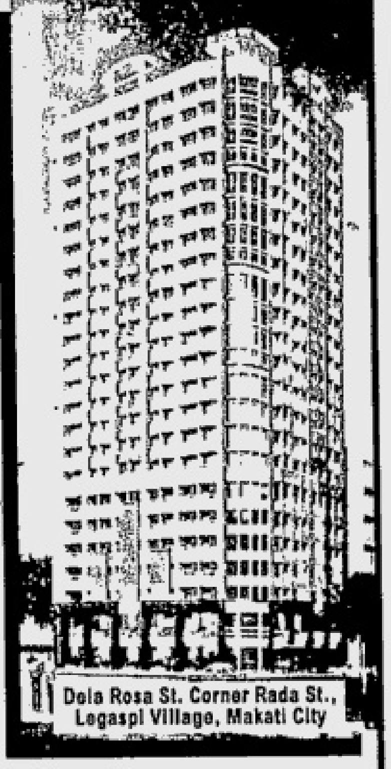

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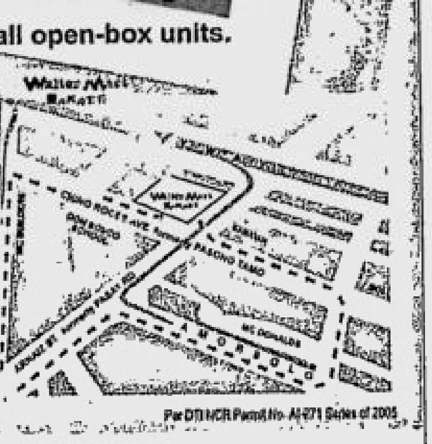

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Israel set to postpone planned pullout from Gaza

JERUSALEM—The Israeli government was poised on Tuesday to announce a delay to the planned pullout from the Gaza Strip as Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz faced a showdown with settler leaders during a planned visit to the territory.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was chairing a meeting of a Cabinet sub-committee charged with overseeing the pullout, has already indicated that he is in favor of a three-week postponement to the evacuation process which is currently due to begin on July 20.

The head of the disengagement office, Jonathan Bassi, had suggested at a Cabinet meeting on Sunday that the month-long operation be postponed to allow observant Jews to mourn the destruction of the second Jewish Temple.

The day to commemorate the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem in 70 AD falls on Aug. 14, when many Jews will observe a 24-hour fast.

"We need to do everything to make the evacuation easier and to allow settlers to overcome the crisis of disengagement," Sharon told reporters on Monday.

If the Cabinet sub-committee approves the three-week postponement, the month-long operation should now get underway Aug. 15. Some ministers within his Cabinet however are unhappy that the decision to delay the pullout will be seen as a cave-in to religious pressure.

"One delay will lead to another," said minister without portfolio Shalom Simhon.

Agriculture Minister Israel Katz, who has been a consistent opponent of the pullout, indicated that he would be pushing for a further delay, arguing that farmers needed more time to prepare for their move. *AFP*

Early universe was 'perfect' fluid–study

WASHINGTON—Scientists using a giant atom smasher said on Monday they have created a new state of matter—a hot, dense liquid made out of basic atomic particles—and said it shows what the early universe looked like for a very, very brief time.

For a tiny fraction of a second after the "big bang" birth of the universe, all matter was in the form of this liquid, called a quark-gluon plasma, the researchers said.

"We have a new state of matter," said Sam Aronson, associate laboratory director for High Energy and Nuclear Physics at the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

"We think we are looking at a phenomenon... in the universe 13 billion years ago when free quarks and gluons... cooled down to the particles that we know today," Aronson told a news conference carried by telephone from a meeting of the American Physical Society in Tampa, Florida.

The quark-gluon plasma was made in the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider—a powerful atom smasher at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York. Unexpectedly, the quark gluon plasma behaved like a perfect liquid of quarks, instead of a gas, the physicists said.

For their experiment, the researchers smashed two gold ions together at extremely high speeds, very close to the speed of light. The collision was so intense that the strong force that usually binds quarks into protons and neutrons weakened, allowing the quarks to roam freely.

Normally quarks, the most basic particles that make up matter, are bound together and cannot be measured directly. *Reuters*

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Italy's political crisis

ROME—Italy's government was thrown back into crisis on Monday when Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi denied he had agreed a major reshuffle that would appease rebel ministers and avoid a coalition collapse. Earlier in the day, ministers said Berlusconi had accepted demands to form an entirely new government and policy strategy for the last year of the administration's term—avoiding the need for a snap election he would probably lose. After a coalition meeting where several colleagues said he agreed the changes, Berlusconi drove to see President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, apparently to tender his resignation as required under the Italian constitution before a major cabinet reshuffle. But after the hour-long meeting, he told reporters he had not resigned and there had been no agreement on a reshuffle—leaving confusion over whether the crisis, the worst in Berlusconi's four-year tenure, was over. ***AP***

Iran bans al Jazeera

TEHRAN—Iran on Monday closed the Tehran bureau of Qatar-based Arab language al Jazeera television channel, accusing it stirring up trouble. At least one person died after Arab-Iranians went on the rampage in the city of Ahvaz, near the border with Iraq, on Friday and Saturday, smashing and setting fire to police cars, banks and government buildings and clashing with police. "Until further investigation about the role of this channel in the recent protests in Ahvaz, its offices will be closed," Mohammad Hussein Khoshvaght said. The channel was closed "for their coverage of these demonstrations which possibly provoked bandits in southwestern Iran." Al Jazeera said it regretted the "unexpected and unwarranted decision" and called on Iranian authorities to reconsider it. ***Reuters***

Australian ports vulnerable

SYDNEY—Australian ports are vulnerable to an attack due to the island continent's extensive coastline, reliance on foreign-crewed ships for trade and proximity to Asian extremist groups, according to a new security report. Australia's heightened security since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States had resulted in few extra resources to prevent a maritime attack, said the report from independent think tank The Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "A determined terrorist is still likely to have little difficulty in entering Australia by sea," said the report, which was released on Tuesday. The most likely target for a maritime attack would be a cruise liner or passenger vessel, a ship carrying dangerous goods or a US navy ship using an Australian port. ***AP***

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OPINION

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EDITORIAL

WHEN it comes to the question of taxing the Roman Catholic Church, the issue is best discussed by making reference to the relevant provisions of the supreme law, the Constitution.

We are all familiar with Art. II, Sec. 6, which states, "The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable"; but the majority of our citizens are unfamiliar with the four other provisions, containing six sections and subsections, crucial to understanding the issue. They begin with Art. III, Sec. 5, which details the meaning of the separation of Church and State: "No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."

In Art. VI, there is Sec. 28 (3) which states, "Charitable institutions, churches and personages or convents appurtenant thereto, mosques, non-profit cemeteries, and all lands, buildings, and improvements, actually, directly, and exclusively used for religious, charitable, or educational purposes shall be exempt from taxation." There is also Sec. 29 (2) which specifies that "No public money or property shall be appropriated, applied, paid, or employed, directly or indirectly, for the use, benefit, or support of any sect, church, denomination, sectarian institution, or system of religion, or of any priest, preacher, minister, other religious teacher, or dignitary as such, except when such priest, preacher, minister, or dignitary is assigned to the armed forces, or to any penal institution, or government orphanage or leprosarium."

Furthermore, Art. XII, Section 6, specifically says that "The use of property bears a social function, and all economic agents shall contribute to the common good. Individuals and private groups… shall have the right to own, establish, and operate economic enterprises, subject to the duty of the State to promote distributive justice and to intervene when the common good so demands."

Finally, Art. XIV Sec. 4 has two crucial subsections: (2) "Educational institutions, other than those established by religious groups and mission boards, shall be owned solely by citizens of the Philippines…" and (3) "All revenues and assets of non-stock, non-profit educational institutions used actually, directly, and exclusively for educational purposes shall be exempt from taxes and duties…."

Viewing the totality of these provisions, it is clear that the government has every right to impose taxes on the businesses and property of any religion—when those businesses or property generate revenues of a commercial nature. Indeed, while the state respects the freedom of religion, and recognizes the benefits of charitable, religious, and educational efforts of religion in society, such recognition cannot entail special favors or exemptions for a specific faith. All religions can enjoy tax-free property, for example, if the property is solely for religious use; but the moment property or religious corporations engage in business, then they must be taxed in the same manner as any business. After all, property and economic activity, as the Constitution states, have "a social function"; that function includes the duty of every citizen to pay taxes to the government; and with respect to certain activities, such as education, not to make them profit-oriented.

The Constitution imposes limits, after all, on government taxation of churches; all religious organizations should be content with what the Constitution makes explicit. It cannot plead for what it may perceive as implicit exemptions: the very reason the Constitution goes to such lengths and details is precisely to avoid any possibility of religions, or of a religion, enjoying an illegal and unfair patronage from the State or its officials. Jesus Christ, after all, instructed his followers to "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's."

War and corruption

FOREIGN COMMENT

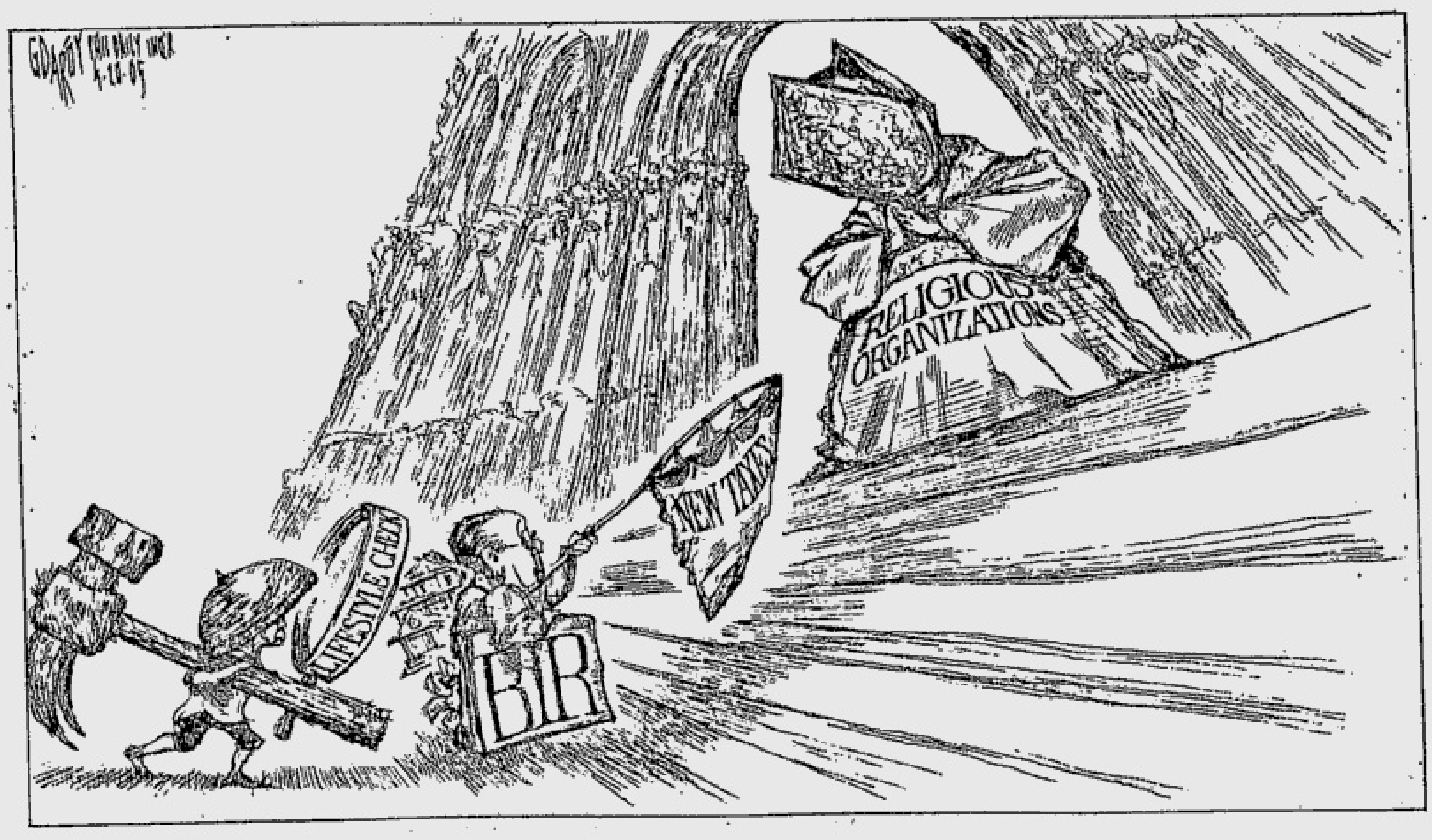
AFTER DECADES of war, the parties in Sudan's north-south conflict signed a peace agreement. But another conflict continues, in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

Much can go wrong in Sudan, especially if money floods in without control over its use. That would encourage corruption.

Yasser Arafat did not build democracy for the Palestinians. He did not want the scrutiny of an open society. This encouraged corruption and misuse of funds. So there was a gap between the donor nations' goals and the result. The Palestinians' new leadership has had to give in to international pressure and adopt new and better measures.

Without support, bad can become worse in many countries. But without control of the money, bad will definitely turn out for the worst.

Bergens Tidende (Bergen, Norway)



Tax exemption of Church now outdated

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHAT'S wrong with taxing the religious institutions here? If our tax system is to be fair and progressive, we should tax those making a lot of money. And there are no organizations here making more money than the religious institutions. The Iglesia ni Kristo and El Shaddai probably make more money in profit every week than a good-sized private corporation. The Catholic schools probably gross more than the Bureau of Customs every year. Are they paying taxes? If the ordinary clerk earning a few thousand pesos a month has to pay taxes, why not they? If the government wants to squeeze more taxes from the people who can hardly make both ends meet, why is it shy about asking religious institutions earning billions of pesos to share in the burden?

But the Constitution exempts the Church from taxes, some say. True, but that provision in the Constitution is more than 100 years old. And it springs from the colonial times when the Church meddled in the affairs of the State. During the Spanish regime, the friars dictated to the colonial government, so it is not surprising that the Constitution fashioned by leaders who grew up during those times exempted the Church from taxes. All the other constitutions that came after that first one adopted that tax-exemption provision. That was how afraid we were of the Church.

Even now, our "great" leaders scrambling for scarce funds are still afraid to tax the Catholic Church and other religious organizations. They still remember what the priests and nuns and their followers were able to do to two duly elected presidents. They remember the votes delivered by the INC, El Shaddai and other religious groups every election. And our leaders being the politicians that they are, always craving for votes, are afraid to offend the religious groups. That is why Malacañang immediately disowned Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno who is only trying to collect the revenues that he was ordered to do. President Macapagal-Arroyo is probably afraid that what she did to President Estrada will be done to her if she offends the religious.

But the Constitution is not all encompassing. It exempts the Church itself from taxes but it is silent on the businesses that they run. Parayno will not tax the religious leaders and their religious organizations, but he wants to tax profits from church lands, buildings and from other businesses and investments. What's wrong with that?

And Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said that the "Church or church groups in business were never exempt (from taxes) and I don't believe they're asking for exemption."

And anyway, I think that provision, after 100 years, is now outdated, obsolete, and should be repealed. In the old days, churches were in far-flung places, the missionaries depended on donations, and schools were small. They deserved to be tax-exempt. Times have changed. Church groups are now very rich and have multimillion-peso businesses. They don't have to be tax-exempt anymore.

All these religious groups preach sacrifice and charity to their flocks. They tell their followers to give, give, give to their churches regularly. They rake in millions weekly from these contributions, mostly from small wage earners. Yet when these churches are asked by their government to make their own sacrifices and contribute to the empty treasury, they refuse to do their share.

Even assuming they are totally exempt from taxes, what's wrong with doing what they themselves preach—practice charity and sacrifice? What's wrong with volunteering to pay, contribute, donate even if they are tax-exempt? Many people who are less endowed have contributed to government coffers even if they are not obliged to, why not religious organizations whose reason for being is to help others? Even if they are exempt from taxes, they are not exempt from sharing everybody's burden. Doesn't God bless those who make sacrifices? Doesn't He look kindly on those who help others?

But the religious think they are exempt from everything. I recall how priests lobbied for the passage of the urban land reform law that favored the taking over of small private lands by squatters. Their hearts bleed for the opportunistic squatters at the expense of the law-abiding, tax-paying owners. But at the same time, they refuse to donate their vast friar lands for the relocation of squatters.

As for the Arroyo administration, it has no moral right to demand more taxes from those who earn a pittance if it will not have the guts to collect from those who earn billions.

If the administration is sincere about going after those who don't pay taxes, why does it not go after the church groups which, of all people, can afford to pay?

* * *

Meanwhile, Rep. Joey Salceda warned that the Senate version of the VAT bill would punish profitable corporations instead of rich consumers. Salceda was referring to provisions preventing power generation firms from passing on the VAT to consumers, and raising the corporate tax from 32 percent to 35 percent.

So what is wrong with taxing profitable corporations?

What's wrong with raising the maximum corporate income tax if the corporations are making plenty of profits? A middle-income earner pays a maximum tax of 32 percent, why not corporations making hundreds of millions of pesos in profits? And the consumers to whom the power firms will pass on the VAT are not rich. They will pass it on to every consumer, including the poor squatters.

And what about Jose Pidal who admits to having a P300-million deposit in the bank? Did he pay taxes on the money? Shouldn't the BIR collect taxes from him?

Rubbing it in

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I READ with much amusement Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing's rather peeved remarks about me (Letters, PDI, 4/18/05) or the column I wrote about the Supreme Court's decision on Susan Roces' electoral protest, which I heard he penned.

He says "the quatrain I used was downloaded from the Internet, as translated into 'ascii in 1993' by Dave Gross, who entitled the collection as the 'Rubayyat' (not 'Rubaiyat')." He says he has been a working editor since his teens and would welcome literary advice from me, but someone should give me sound advice on judicial matters as well. And he says I should keep the rubbing business to myself since that is something I seem to excel in.

Well, first off, I have a bit of news for him. "Ascii" is not a form of English, it (American Standard Code for Information Exchange) is a form of computerese. It is the universal, non-formatted text, which was the favored mode of communicating in cyberspace in DOS-based times, before Windows came to rule the world. Indeed, before floppies turned into hard disks. I can assure him the entire epic is available in fonts that are kinder to eyes above 50 and can appreciate beauty. I imagine even Supreme Court justices can afford to replace XT with XP.

While at this, I don't know that it is a comforting thought that the Supreme Court engorges its judicial imagination with inputs from the Internet. The only comparable thing I can think of is American military officials confessing that part of its brief about the weapons of mass destruction in Saddam Hussein's arsenal came from articles in the Internet. Well, we know how accurate that turned out to be. We know as well that despite the humongous mistake—a most witting one—the United States has neither apologized to Iraqis nor left their country.

But whether Quisumbing downloaded Khayyam's quatrain from the Internet or drew it from a high school textbook, whether he got it in Ascii or Arial, whether he perused it in archaic English or the modern one, it doesn't change the fact that it is a horrendous malapropism. Or more than malapropism, a supreme irony. The "Moving Finger" in all those versions still refers to the one that decorated King Belshazzar's wall with the ominous words, "*Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*," a warning his tyranny was at an end. That cannot possibly refer to Susan Roces, the one protesting the elections vigorously. That can only refer to GMA, the one ruling this country badly.

The "*tekel*" in particular is apt: "You have been weighed and found wanting." Or in Tagalog, "*Tinimbang ka, ngunit kulang*." I will admit my literary limitations and say I cannot translate that into God's language.

Quisumbing says I should be advised on the limits of judicial power. That may be so, but he should be reminded of the possibilities of judicial wisdom. Frankly, I cannot understand why the Supreme Court likes to demonstrate possibility where there should be limit, and limit where there should be possibility. When it keeps chanting like a mantra that it is not a trier of facts, it is a trier of principle. It is not there to catalogue, it is there to interpret. It is not there to pin down life to a set of rules emblazoned in tablet, it is there to set life free by enlarging the scope of law to encompass right and wrong. Why else call it Supreme Court? Why not just call it regular *siopao*?

Dismissing Roces' "noble intention and interest to find out the true will of the electorate" because it is "not the point" is a technicality. It is no less a technicality than that the quatrain Quisumbing quotes comes from a version that is spelled "Rubayyat" and not "Rubaiyat." Any literate person, not to speak of a justice, knows that Arabic, like Chinese or Japanese, is a language that is hard to translate in Roman script and is bound to be spelled differently. Some say Koran, others say Q'uran. It doesn't change what the thing says. It's the same banana, or Bible. That Quisumbing should dwell on the differences in spelling between "Rubayyat" and "Rubaiyat" does suggest a kind of scrupulousness to detail but general lack of imagination, literary and judicial—or a penchant for looking at the trees and not the forest—that one suspects proliferates among the current justices. Which explains why they argued their dismissal of Roces' case the way they did.

Finally, the part about keeping the rubbing business to myself, which I seem to excel in. Well, there are rubbings and rubbings. If he means the kind done in secret with the aim of inducing agonized pleasure, I truly wouldn't mind keeping it to myself. I do not even mind excelling in it. The product of it I can always flush into the subterranean canals of this city, happy in the thought that I am not doing the environment a disservice since tissue paper is biodegradable.

However, the kind he and his colleagues like to practice, and patently excel in, is the one where the product squirts right into the public's face. Which is not easily removed with soap and water. It lingers, in all its gooey malodorousness. It is the same kind of rubbing done by the dregs of the journalism profession when they cannot find exciting stories to regale the public with. They decide to improve on reality, or manufacture it completely. It is called exactly the same thing, with exactly the same results. Go figure the word.

Associate Justice Quisumbing himself, before he moves his fingers again to apply ink to paper, or other liquids to other targets, might first wish to reflect on the meaning of the word "Justice." Never mind "Associate."

John Paul the Great?

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

BEFORE THE CONCLAVE to elect the next pope opened last Monday, a number of conservative cardinals issued a call to proclaim the late pontiff "John Paul the Great." The call was sounded by Cardinal George Pell, archbishop of Sydney, an ardent admirer of John Paul. It was echoed, outside the conclave, by Cardinal Edward Clancy, retired archbishop of Sydney, who said that there would be many different assessments of John Paul's pontificate, and history would take its time in forming a final judgment.

"I have no doubt that it will find John Paul II one of the outstanding popes of all time," he said. "He will be ranked with those Greats of the Church's history, Leo and Gregory, and, like them will be gratefully remembered and revered for ages to come."

Several newspapers in Italy, Britain and other countries have used the title "John Paul the Great" in covering the Pope's funeral. The title "the great" is not formally conferred by the Church, not even by the conclave. It grows out of popular acclaim. The Pope's most senior aide, Angelo Sodano, referred to the pontiff as "John Paul the Great" in a written text issued to reporters after his death.

The call sparked criticisms from liberal groups in the Church. They have been critical of the conservative bent of John Paul's pontificate. They accused supporters of the Pope as exaggerating his place in Catholic history—to tie the hands of future popes and make it impossible for successors in the coming decades to move away from his "tough positions" on issues such as contraception, women priests, married clergy and divorce.

One liberal said the rush to bestow the title was deliberate. "It's part of a rush to attempt to commit the pope's successor to what policies he should follow, and to push the cardinals in their conclave in a certain direction," says John Wilkins, a former editor of a Catholic weekly, The Tablet.

It should be noted that the rather premature move to declare John Paul "the Great" emphasized his pivotal role in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, not so much the doctrinal issues that have now divided the Church deeply in the wake of his death. He is being raised to the level of Pope Leo I (440-461) and Gregory I (590-604) two of the medieval popes in the 2,000-year history of the Catholic Church, given the title. The two are widely remembered for their work as political leaders rather than for their spiritual direction. Pope Leo I was bestowed the title of "the Great" because of his political role in saving Rome from being sacked by Atilla and the Huns in 452, during the Dark Ages marked by the barbarian invasions of Europe.

There are some parallels in the pontificates of Leo the Great and John Paul. Both are cast in the role of heroic saviors of Christendom and as "men of the hour" whose interventions changed the course of history.

The 115 cardinals in the conclave are electing a new pope under the shadow of John Paul II, who left an immense legacy with his role as an influential international political leader and with his conservative policies cast in iron by his long, 26-year pontificate.

Henry Kissinger has described John Paul II as "one of the greatest men of the last century—perhaps the greatest," and Kissinger made the assessment on the basis of the political impact of the pope on world history. George Weigel, John Paul's biographer, said he was not simply the man of the century but "the prophet of the new millennium."

In the assessment of his pontificate, John Paul comes out as a colossal figure standing astride the turbulent contours of the Cold War which was entering a turning point amid the restiveness of the Eastern European vassal states of the Soviet Union. At that time, the vassal states were trying to break loose from Moscow's control, following the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact armies, to crush the movement led by Alexander Dubcek to liberalize communism and give it a "human face." The Prague "spring" revealed the cracks on the Iron Curtain that led to communism's collapse in 1989. John Paul was elected pope in October 1978, a key moment of history, in that it accelerated the collapse of communism.

On June 2, 1979, John Paul visited his homeland, where the mammoth crowds in Warsaw assembled to welcome him caused profound concern in Warsaw's communist regime and made Moscow regret that it allowed him to visit Poland. "There is no need to be afraid," the Pope told two million Poles. "The frontiers must be open and there is no imperialism in the Church." The defiant message was the catalyst that gave birth to the Solidarity trade union two months later. The union became a movement which later campaigned for elections and political pluralism. The defiance served as an inspiration to other communist parties in Eastern Europe.

Historians attribute the fall of communism to the decisions of two key national leaders—President Ronald Reagan of the United States and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. But they credit the Pope for providing the high moral example and teachings that helped doom the communist regime.

The Pope himself was modest about his role. He said that his intervention came when the communist system was already in a state of decay. When Gorbachev introduced his wife to the Pope, he said "I have the honor to introduce the highest moral authority on earth and he is a Slav like us." For the Pope, Gorbachev was a "providential man whose coming had paved the way for the greatest realignment, moral and political, of the late 20th century."

Men giving up violence

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MANY times, while being interviewed about the issue of violence against women, I'm asked what is being done or could be done about the perpetrators, the abusers, rapists or harassers, the great majority of whom are men.

Government agencies and non-government organizations have over the years formulated numerous responses to the problem of violence against women—from shelters to neighborhood watches, feminist counseling programs to livelihood training courses; even "one-stop shops" for debriefing survivors of violence and training for hospital personnel to spot possible or potential victims.

Admittedly, little has been done to reach out to the men fomenting the violence, beyond passing laws that would make it easier to apprehend them, sentence them and keep them behind bars. To my knowledge, there is only one local NGO, which is "faith-based," working actively on the rehabilitation or counseling of men with a record of abuse or abusive tendencies.

In its most recent issue, which focuses on "Nonconsensual Sex," Network, a magazine published by Family Health International, featured articles on programs elsewhere in the world that work with "men giving up violence."

In Peru, says one article, there is a program to support the efforts of men "(seeking) models of masculinity that do not include partner violence." Implemented by Cayetano Heredia University, the program was started in June last year at two locations in Lima.

The program gathers men in abusive relationships and encourages them "to reflect on their personal experiences and to commit themselves to non-violence at home." The participants in the program, which consists of two-hour weekly sessions for about a year, learn techniques to avoid violence and resolve conflicts with partners and children. "Men are also encouraged to explore ways to express their masculinity while simultaneously treating partners with affection, respecting women's rights, and valuing equality within an intimate relationship."

* * *

THE PERUVIAN program is based on other programs, such as the Mexico-based "Collective of Men for Equitable Relationships," "that work directly with male aggressors to confront and discourage traditional attitudes about gender roles that may condone violence against women."

This early, admits the article's authors, it is difficult to gauge how successful this approach has been in changing the men's attitudes and behaviors. The Mexico-based initiative lacked the resources to formally evaluate the impact of its program, though the entry of more men into the program—upon the recommendation of former participants who felt the program helped them—"was considered a measure of success."

In Peru, it's still too early to judge the program's long-term success, though again, new participants to the program have been referred by earlier participants and feminist organizations, indicating "that it is having a social impact."

At the individual level, the Peru program has produced personal testimonials that speak of "unambiguous" success. One 35-year-old participant said that he "learned to value myself and to identify and stop my violence." Another man admitted that "I started to do some domestic work at the beginning of this program, although I was feeling this was not my job. But the last time I helped her, I felt that the domestic work was not necessarily my wife's job, and I felt good about that change in my attitude."

* * *

ANOTHER article in the same issue focuses on another "promising" pilot program called "Brothers for Change," established in Jamaica in 1999 by the Jamaican Family Planning Association (Famplan).

Noting that nonconsensual or forced sex was often the cause of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies and other gynecological disorders among their women clients, Famplan began collaborating with local probation officers, correctional services and judges to offer group counseling to male perpetrators referred by the courts. All men were expected to attend counseling sessions at least once a week for 20 weeks.

More than 40 men participated in "Brothers for Change" between 1999 and 2000, while Famplan has also reached more than 3,000 additional adolescent boys and men in schools, youth groups, churches, correctional facilities, and other venues.

Through a survey, Famplan identified several indicators of success with regular participants. "For example, men's partners reported that they were less violent. Also, the men were increasingly able to identify various forms of violence, control their anger, and take responsibility for their actions."

* * *

THE PROGRAMS in Peru, Jamaica and Mexico are all in the pilot stage, and are still struggling to retain their funding support. Here in the Philippines, a number of groups of "men against violence" have been established. I know of at least one each in Davao City, Cebu and Metro Manila. But I don't know if they have programs that work directly with abusers or rapists and child molesters.

At public forums on violence against women, someone in the audience inevitably asks whether women's groups are starting to work with men, possibly to rehabilitate abusers. But the reality is that women's groups are already hard put as it is coping with the needs of women and children survivors of abuse. If men really want to put an end to gender-based violence, then they themselves must organize and raise the funds to reach out to abusive men in need of counseling, possibly with the support of women's groups.

Besides, as other programs have shown, men listen and open up primarily to other men, so the brotherhood needs to step up and do its share in getting all men to give up violence.

Backyard history

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WE are pleased with and elated at the recent pronouncement of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza calling for a moratorium on the renaming of streets in the capital. We hope that other local officials—and, perhaps, some members of Congress—follow suit so that we can sit down to assess the landscape, and see whether our streets are still signposts to our history and culture.

The next thing on the agenda in making our surroundings more pleasant will be to put up a system and formulate a policy regulating the use of billboards and commercial signage around the country. Metro Manila is hopeless in this respect and, I guess, we have grown accustomed to the billboards. But in areas outside the city, billboards really assault our sight.

Passing through the North Luzon Expressway, you will see numerous billboards blocking the view of Mt. Arayat, which has been immortalized in many pre-war paintings, some of which by the national artist Fernando Amorsolo. Those who cannot afford the astronomical sums these paintings now command in international auctions should be allowed to see Arayat and the surrounding countryside for free because this view is part of our patrimony, part of our heritage.

I was recently in Legazpi City and found myself very upset when I got into the center of the town, a spot that could very well be called "the navel of Legazpi." From there people once could see post-card-pretty Mayon volcano as a backdrop to the city.

Today, this same view, once enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, is obstructed by a Jollibee billboard. Surely, some regulations on billboards have become necessary.

Back to the Manila streets and the issue on renaming them, the National Historical Institute will soon be publishing a modest dictionary of the names of Manila's streets. I was able to scan a few pages before the manuscript was sent to the press, and just on the entries for letter "A," I learned so much about the city and its street names. Much of the material is obscure and will surely turn up as a million-peso question in one of the TV game shows.

I always knew there was a street in Paco named "Trece de Agosto" or "13 de Agosto," which is also my birthday. The date used to be an official holiday in the American period and was known as "Occupation Day." It commemorated the fall of Spanish Manila to the Americans in 1898. I have been looking for property in this area because of its historical and personal significance to me. Another person on the lookout for a place with personal and historical resonance to her is the writer and historian Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. She has cast an acquisitive look at the corner of Guerrero and Nakpil streets in Malate.

Aside from 13 de Agosto, there is another street in Sampaloc called "19 de Agosto," so named to commemorate the date the Katipunan was discovered by the Spaniards in 1896. A street in Tondo is called "19 de Junio," and one would presume that residents know that the street name refers to the birthday of Jose Rizal who was born in 1861. Wouldn't Tondo, perhaps, be better off with the birth date of Andres Bonifacio?

Many streets are named after people born in the late 19th century. Many of them are not very well known even to a historian like myself. A. Cecilio in Tondo refers to Agaton Cecilio, a mason and Katipunero who served in the municipal board of Manila in 1939. A. Cruz in Sta. Ana refers to Apolonio de la Cruz (1864-1897), one of the men martyred in Bagumbayan and whose name will be inscribed in stone in Rizal Park this year so that people will remember and appreciate his sacrifice. Of course, there are well-known heroes, like A. Mabini, and a number of politicians—national and local—who are honored with streets named after them. The most prominent among them are A.H. Lacson in Sampaloc, and A. Villegas in Ermita—both of whom served as mayors of Manila. Some are named after educators: A. Vitan in Sampaloc refers to Andrea Vitan Arce, one of the first 10 teachers in Sampaloc during the American period. A. Maceda, also in Sampaloc, was once known as Washington Street, but it was later renamed after Antonio P. Maceda, division superintendent of the Bureau of Education in 1933.

There are references to literature, like Adonis and Adolfo in Pandacan. These are two of a network of streets named after some characters in Balagtas' "Florante at Laura." In Sampaloc is a similar grouping of streets named after characters in Rizal's novels: Basilio, Crispin, Ibarra and Maria Clara; and after Rizal's friends like Pi Y Margall and Blumentritt; and also after some of his obscure works: "Makamisa" and "Metrica." Other streets refer to other places like Abra in Santa Ana and Tondo, or Abucay in Tondo. ("Abucay" is the name not just of a town in Bataan but also of a species of grass and of a type of white parrot.) There are streets named after semi-precious stones like Agata in San Andres, or trees like Acacia in San Miguel. There is even an Aceite Street in Pandacan, probably named after the defunct Philippine Vegetable Oil Company ("aceite" is the Spanish word for oil).

Just browsing through the first three pages of this forthcoming dictionary of street names provided a lot of delight and cross-references. We hope this work will be published soon, not just as a guide but also as a way of helping people realize that street names bring history, literally, into their backyards.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Violence and impunity

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

RSF (Reporters Sans Frontieres or Reporters Without Borders) was the first to note, three years back, the high mortality rate of mass media practitioners in the Philippines. (We now rank second globally in terms of the number of journalists being murdered.) Recently, the organization issued a report analyzing the continuing killings and harassment of Filipino journalists and concluding that there is a "culture of impunity" at work here.

In the report, RSF notes that "a culture of violence" is usually the first to be blamed as the cause of the journalists' deaths; but it says the "culture of impunity" should also be considered. After all, there are many war-torn countries where far fewer journalists are being killed. RSF's observations should get us to think some more about where we are, not just in relation to the deaths of the journalists but about the way we look at life in the Philippines, in general.

Violence

We profess, all the time, our respect for life, from the womb to the deathbed. But I've written time and time again that we have one of the highest homicide and murder rates in the world. Let's look at some of the statistics from the government's most recent (1997...sigh!) Philippine Health Statistics: under "homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons," we have 10,885 deaths; another 6,870 deaths were reported as caused by "accidents undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted." Even limiting ourselves to the figure of 10,885, homicides and murders would still rank seventh among the leading causes of death in the country.

Two-thirds of the victims are between the ages of 20 and 40, people at the prime of their lives. I thought immediately of the spouses and children left behind, of promising careers aborted.

The gender factor is important: of the total deaths caused by homicide—10,085 were males; 800 were female. I am pretty sure the gender ratio for the perpetrators is similar.

The statistics don't tell us what led to the homicides. The news reports often refer to "drug-crazed" perpetrators and, no doubt, drugs do come into the picture; and yet, I'd urge a review of the statistics: a "drug-crazed" individual is usually too far gone to murder someone. I'd worry more about a more insidious drug: alcohol. Just look at the media reports on alcohol-related violence, in beer houses, in karaoke joints, even in homes when men get together to drink. The reasons for altercations vary; but from the mass media reports, they can be most trivial—from an argument over the karaoke microphone to a dirty look (*masamang tingin*).

Socially sanctioned

Some of you might be saying, "Oh, but those dirty look incidents happen only occasionally." The next question then: are these reasons serious enough to justify a homicide or murder?

Our laws do recognize mitigating circumstances. Self-defense is the best example, and it's interesting how this can now be used by victims of domestic violence to get an acquittal.

Other "mitigating" circumstances are more dubious. Under our Penal Code, someone who catches his or her spouse in the act of extramarital dalliance and kills the unfaithful one only gets the penalty of *destierro* (a form of banishment). It's the same light penalty for a parent who kills his daughter or her lover if they are caught having sexual intercourse. Both provisions are obviously based on concepts of honor (and are more likely to be used by husbands and fathers).

The defense of one's life, or honor, takes us into a gray area of revenge. Ideas of revenge are still strong in our society, with entire provinces often held hostage as clans and tribes go on never-ending feuds and vendettas. Bishop Prudencio Andaya of the vicariate of Tabuk recently asked our anthropology department at UP Diliman if we could help him look into this problem. In Muslim Mindanao, some of the periodic outbursts of mass violence are actually clan feuds rather than secessionist or terrorist initiatives.

I do not want to stereotype our Muslims and indigenous peoples as being the only ones who invoke revenge for killing. Vendetta killings are common too among Filipino Christians, and in some provinces, the violence may involve entire clans, usually political families.

Punity and impunity

The concept of revenge becomes even more distorted and perverse when it is combined with power. In our feudal society, the rich and famous see no bounds to their privileges, and this can include the right to exterminate people they don't like. For centuries now, these warlords have wielded absolute power and, until recently, the victims were mainly rival families or the powerless—tenants on an hacienda, for example.

Then journalists came around, wielding power through the pen. In larger cities, journalists have consolidated their power, even as they are constantly in danger of themselves becoming corrupted by that power. But in rural areas, it is only in recent years that journalists have mustered enough courage to transform their newspapers and radio stations into platforms for speaking out against injustices.

The politicians and their goons are startled, recognizing the threats to their power. They're thinking: "How dare these journalists?" Retaliation is swift. Journalists aren't killed; they're executed. The politicians think they're in the right, and so do the police and judges. That's why we have a culture of impunity, the idea that one is above the law.

The roots of impunity go deep into our society. We see this expressed even within families and in offices. People are so easily seduced by power, even as a father or the head of some small office is. It's this intoxication with power that's at the root of corruption—these petty tyrants believing they're entitled to use office funds for personal needs. And when people begin to speak out, asking for reforms, they bristle with rage.

The problems become even more complicated because we are a punitive society. Filipino child-rearing patterns often center around punishment and threats rather than on an ethical understanding of right and wrong. We are therefore conditioned to behave only if there is a chance of being caught and punished. The powerful learn, early enough, that they are above the law.

Tie that fact to RSF's investigative report on the killing of Filipino journalists: "We found out that in all cases, including the most high-profile ones, there has been no instance where the mastermind was arrested."

Impunity sets off a deadly domino effect. Given our lax laws on gun ownership, impunity further inflames the culture of violence. That security guard strutting around with a gun is, potentially, an assassin. He doesn't have to become a gun for hire; he may be driven by his boss' intoxication with power, mixed with a distorted sense of loyalty. As he aims for his victim, he does not see a person; he sees the boss' rival, an enemy whose life carries no value.

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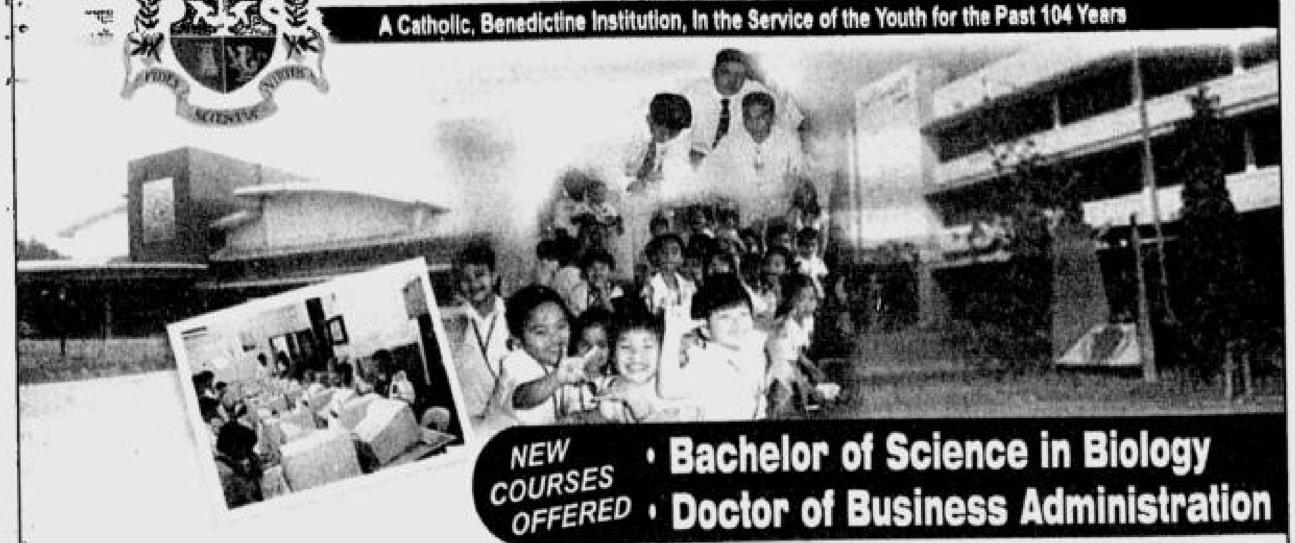

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Realistic statutes against prostitution

THE ANTI-PROSTITUTION bill should be realistic. Not all prostitutes are female and young, and not all clients are male and old.

And prostitution flourishes because of hard times. Prostitutes sell themselves not because they want to but because they have economic needs. And the need of prostitutes for clients is greater than the need of clients (who can always resort to self-gratification) for prostitutes.

Not all prostitutes are shrinking violets. Many of them are wise in the ways of the world, are calculating and are steeped in the art of survival. (Of course, if they are less than 18 years of age, they are considered children and not capable of rational consent.) If the law gives adult prostitutes immunity, it will add frame-up and blackmail to their repertoire.

While getting the services of prostitutes is abhorrent and should be penalized, selling one's body is definitely more abhorrent and should be subject to greater penalty.

And if the prostitute is female, the greater the blot on society because the vaunted purity of the Filipina would be defiled, and the introduction of spurious heirs to marriages—the husbands not knowing any better—would become more rampant.

—RENE TORRES,
Makati City,
rentorres@yahoo.com

Mantas' fins can't squeeze their enemies

I WOULD like to point out a gross error in the article titled "Reef facing extinction due to crown of thorns" by Bobby Labalan. (PDI, 3/31/05)

The article says "They (manta rays) use their wings to seize enemies and squeeze them to death."

Please be informed that manta rays only use their pectoral fins (or "wings" as the article calls them) to propel themselves through water. It is impossible for them to "squeeze enemies to death."

Furthermore, mantas only eat microscopic plankton. If the mantas are pursued either by humans or their natural predators (like sharks), they can only use their pectoral fins to escape.

—NINO JACINTO,
38 Jasmin St.,
Valle Verde 2, Pasig City 1604

THE PART of the article that said, "mantas use their powerful wings to squeeze enemies to death" was taken from the briefing kit provided by Cecile Duran, one of the convenors of the group which is initiating a move to save the Tacdugan Reef, home of the mantas. She said she got the information from the Net. If there is any claim to the contrary, please be assured that the source and the INQUIRER didn't have any intention to mislead the readers.

—BOBBY Q. LABALAN,
correspondent,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

War veteran thanks Senator Gordon

WORLD War II Filipino veterans throughout the country must have shed tears of joy upon reading the article "Senator says gov't owes vets P24B" by Nestor P. Burgos Jr. (PDI, 3/24/05)

As Sen. Richard Gordon said, "Let us not forget those who died. But let us not forget our veterans who are still alive" in his speech on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Panay, Guimaras and Romblon from the Japanese Imperial Forces.

He further said, "But an effort must be made by both the Philippines and the United States to [identify] the legitimate ones, and they [the two governments] should not hide behind the fact that too many people are applying. They must find those who really died and served this country during that fateful war."

On the P24 billion the Philippine government owes all veterans, the good senator likewise said that "It is not right to say we have no money. We must find that money to pay [our] veterans."

However, it is ironic that of the 23 senators, only Gordon, a neophyte, has the heart to help the Filipino veterans of World War II who are now in the twilight of their lives. Gordon emphasized in his speech that the Filipino veterans in the United States "have gotten their fair share" in terms of benefits and compensation, but the veterans in the Philippines "have gotten nothing so far."

May God bless you, Mr. Senator. *Mabuhay ka!*

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA,
district adjutant,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines,
Camarines Norte Veterans District,
Pasig, Daet, Camarines Norte 4600

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

Farmer sets record in palay harvest

By Anselmo Roque
San Jose City

FERNANDO Gabuyo of Barangay Tondod in Nueva Ecija's San Jose City has established a record in palay (unhusked rice) production, which, if replicated by other farmers, could set the country toward self-sufficiency in rice.

"It's 346.1 cavans in one hectare," city agriculturist Rogelio Malunay announced after the weigh-in last week at Gabuyo's yard. The record breached the 300-cavan mark, which was the target set by Gabuyo and a newfound ally from Metro Manila.

The announcement was greeted by a sudden burst of applause and yell from people who gathered to monitor the palay harvesting and threshing for two days. They included those tasked with auditing and certifying the harvest, city and barangay officials, and the farmer's collaborating inventor-partner who, like him, was on tenterhooks as results of the monitoring of the harvest were awaited.

Other onlookers were the usual skeptics who said it would be impossible for anyone to attain a yield of 300 cavans.

Malunay said Gabuyo's harvest, which was equivalent to 17.305 metric tons, topped the 14.50 MT haul set last year by Eulogio Guira of Davao del Sur in the "Bigante Higanteng Ani Awards," which was sponsored by Bayer CropScience. (Twenty cavans of 50 kilos each convert into one metric ton of palay.)

It was the second highest yield in a hectare to the announced 17.48 MT dried harvest in China, Malunay said. He hastened to add, though, that China's record was in the field trial of a yet-to-be-commercialized superhybrid rice variety. (An estimated 2-percent loss in weight is registered when the fresh harvest is dried for milling).

Dramatic increase

Gabuyo's harvest was a dramatic increase from the 13.01 MT that placed him second in the Bigante contest. For being Luzon's highest rice producer, he was given a new power tiller and a trophy by then Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo and Bayer's BioScience manager Carlos Miguel Saplala.

But regardless of the outcome of the contest, Gabuyo's yield is expected to be noticed by agriculture officials and other farmers. It is almost three times the average yield per-hectare of hybrid rice seeds and almost four times that of the average for inbred rice varieties.

In 2003, the Department of Agriculture reported that the average yield of hybrid rice seed per hectare was 6.20 MT. For inbred rice seed, it was 4.36 MT.

Gabuyo, 56, said he owed it to inventor Alfonso Puyat for achieving the record harvest. Puyat, a son of the late Senate President Gil Puyat, guided him in adopting new technologies in rice production, he said. He went to Gabuyo's farm many times to instruct the farmer on the use of farm inputs that he invented.

Their feat has proven that Filipino farmers can be at par, if not better, than the best rice farmers in the world, and that if given the right focus, the country can be self-sufficient in rice.

Gabuyo said Puyat supplied him the chemicals that enhanced soil fertility in his farm. One of them is used for orchid growing which Gabuyo's wife Erlinda, who used to tend orchids, convinced him to apply on his rice plants. The chemical is described as having plant hormone and vitamins.

Another was an organic degrader, which hastened the decomposition of the rice hay and rice stubble. The decomposed matter served as organic fertilizer.

According to experts, the hay and stubble, which are commonly burned in the field by farmers, provide 50 kilograms of nitrogen (two sacks of urea), 80 kg of phosphorous (five sacks of 0-18-0), and 140 kg of potassium (five sacks of 0-0-60).

Gabuyo said the chemical more than convinced him to collaborate with Puyat as he knew that it would help in checking the usual practice of farmers burning their "gold mine of nutrients."

Easy application

What makes it more convincing is the easy application of the chemical. Gabuyo identified the input as Xemas Maker, which stands for "extremely effective microorganism activated solution." The plant hormone-vitamin is simply called ANAA and the chemical is X-Rice which is described as fertilizer enhancer.

Another chemical was potassium sulfate, which was applied during the grains' formative stage.

Puyat had promised barangay chair Benjamin Salting and San Jose Councilor Resty Domingo, who heads the council's committee on agriculture, that he would help other farmers increase their rice yield.

A former president and chair of Manila Banker's Life Insurance Co., Puyat holds a master's degree in business administration.

FARMER Fernando Gabuyo (third, from left) of San Jose City executes a high five with city agriculturist Rogelio Malunay (left) and inventor Alfonso Puyat after the final tally of his record harvest. ANSELMO ROQUE

His early involvement in formulating chemicals had resulted in the formulation of a mango flower inducer. Then came his widely used hormone for orchids.

Puyat is focusing on developing more chemicals that will help farmers attain the highest rice yields. He said that with an additional investment of only P1,500 per hectare, farmers can be made to approximate or even equal Gabuyo's harvest.

Gabuyo is expected to net at least P145,000, which was much, much higher than the average net returns of farmers of P31,559 for hybrid rice production per hectare.

His average net gain for inbred rice is P15,829 per ha. His expenses totaled P40,000, covering land preparation and inputs, harvesting, threshing, hauling and incidentals.

Multi-awarded

Gabuyo, a marine engineering graduate who abandoned a short stint as an apprentice in an interisland shipping company in the late 1960s, has won a number of awards.

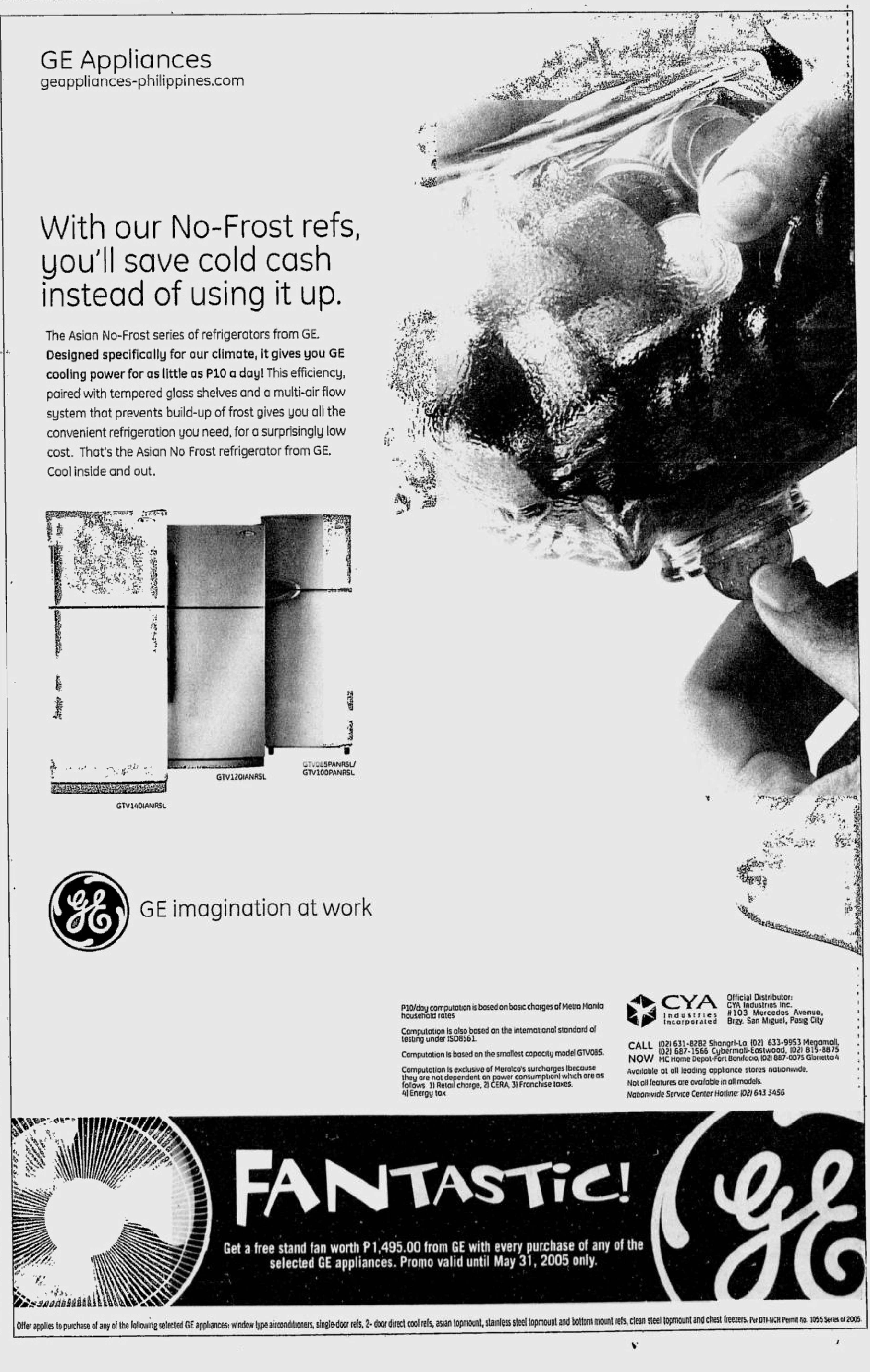
He was cited by the DA for having the highest average yield per hectare in the 2002-03 rice croppings and by the provincial government for garnering the second highest award in hybrid rice production last year.

Starting with only four hectares of land, he now owns and tills a total of 20 ha which he acquired through farming. With the help of hired laborers, he does mostly the cultivation with acquired farm machinery.

He is collaborating with the Philippine-Sino Center for Agricultural Technology in the field trial of a Chinese hybrid rice variety.

Hybrid rice, which is different from the self-pollinating inbred rice varieties invariably called high-yielding varieties, modern rice varieties and conventional rice varieties; is the direct product of two genetically different parents.

It was developed in China through the leadership of Prof. Yuan Longping, who is regarded as the "father of hybrid rice."



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₱60M in smuggled phone cards seized

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The anti-smuggling task force here yesterday seized 200,000 pieces of Smart Buddy prepaid call and text cards worth P60 million.

The items, which were misdeclared as raw polyvinyl chloride, a chemical used in making tiles and plastics, were contained in 26 boxes. The items were flown in from Hong Kong by shipper Evannet Ltd. through international courier Federal Express (FedEx) last week.

Retired Gen. Jose Calimlim, task force chief, said the smuggled shipment was discovered after Bureau of Customs examiner Rico Reyes Jr. noticed a discrepancy in the declaration last week.

Marietta Zamoranos, Subic customs collector, immediately issued a warrant of seizure and detention for the items. She identified the consignee as Lora-Multi Resources, a trading company based in Makati City.

The boxes were declared to contain 470 kilograms of raw polyvinyl chloride but were found out to have prepaid cards costing P300 each.

"The declared customs value of the polyvinyl chloride was US$4,573 or about P260,282. This means the importer would have been assessed only P70,380 in customs duties and taxes," Calimlim said.

He said his team and representatives of Smart Communications Inc. would verify the authenticity of the cards today.

Calimlim cited the cooperation shown by officials of FedEx to foil several smuggling attempts here.

In January, the task force also confiscated assorted pieces of jewelry, worth P15 million, which a suspected smuggling syndicate tried to bring into the country from Hong Kong through FedEx.

The pieces of jewelry, which weighed 22 kgs, were misdeclared as computer parts and discovered while task force officials were holding a random check of FedEx shipments. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Negros drivers proceed with 2nd day of strike

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—About 95 percent of public transportation in Negros Occidental ground to a halt for a second day yesterday when drivers' groups refused to ply their routes to demand the scrapping of the oil deregulation law.

Jessie Ortega, secretary general of the United Negros Drivers Operators Center, warned that his group would stage another strike unless President Macapagal-Arroyo heeded their demand.

Ortega described as a success the two-day protest his group held to demand the scrapping of the Oil Deregulation Law.

Senior Supt. Vicente Ponteras, Bacolod police director, said about 95 percent of jeepneys did not ply their routes and 80 percent of taxis stayed out of the streets. Small buses, however, continued to ply the highways of Negros Occidental.

FIRE DANCE JERRY CARUAL/MALACANANG PHOTO

A performer executes a letter B with his flames, symbolizing Boracay, while President Macapagal-Arroyo and husband Mike look on. Ms Macapagal recently visited Boracay to switch on a new power plant and launch a new resort project.

ROUNDUP

Village chief shot dead

BANGUED, Abra—A village chief in San Isidro town was shot and killed by a suspected New People's Army rebel on April 16. Police said Diosdado Claveria, 52, village chief of San Marcial, was shot while he was attending a neighbor's graduation party. Reports said Claveria was informed that someone was looking for him so he went out of the house with a companion. A man wearing a camouflage uniform and armed with a .45 cal. pistol then shot Claveria several times. On April 17, police arrested six armed men, believed to be sympathizers of Claveria. Reports said the suspects told police that Claveria had helped them financially and they were out to avenge his death. *Artha Kira Paredes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Libel referred to Ombudsman

BAGUIO CITY—City prosecutors have relinquished to the Office of the Ombudsman two libel cases filed against Mayor Braulio Yaranon by two of his predecessors. Former Mayor Bernardo Vergara and Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, who was a three-term mayor until 2001, each filed a P50.1-million libel case against the 79-year-old mayor for allegedly disparaging them as corrupt during a March press conference. Yaranon supposedly described unidentified city officials as corrupt for allowing a private pay parking firm to administer traffic rules in Baguio. City Prosecutor Benedicto Carantes said his associates have determined that Yaranon made the alleged criticisms in his capacity as mayor, and his acts were therefore under the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

NPA rebel nabbed

AGDANGAN, Quezon—A suspected New People's Army rebel was arrested by police over the weekend for allegedly killing a member of the Civilian Auxiliary Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) and wounding a policeman. Both were reported watching a basketball game in the town's covered court last week. A police report said the suspect, Ranilo Rogelio Alson alias Ka Rodel, a resident of this town and two others, who were newly trained members of the local NPA's Sparrow Unit, shot Senon Colar, a militiaman assigned at the Army's 59th Infantry Battalion in the area, in different parts of the body which caused his immediate death. His companion, PO2 Ricardo Santos, was also hit by bullets in different parts of the body but survived. Police said a witness, who was with the two during the shooting, positively identified the suspect. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Volunteers needed

CITY OF CALAPAN—The organizers of a one-day community arts workshop for children and youth participants to be held this month in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro are looking for volunteers. The project, assisted by Plan International and Department of Education Mindoro office, provides opportunities for volunteers to share their time and talent, and for the participants to express themselves creatively. The outreach program will include visual arts (basic drawing/sketching, painting, and terra cotta sculpting), performance arts (basic theater arts and free movement—dance), literature (creative writing and storytelling), and arts and crafts (jewelry-making, paper-making and beadwork). The project, dubbed Tanglaw Sining, promotes the environment by encouraging the participants to use recyclable materials. For details, contact 02-9270688 or e-mail fullhouse_spca@yahoo.com. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TOP LAWYER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. swears in lawyer Pete Principe (third from right) as No. 1 director of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Bulacan.

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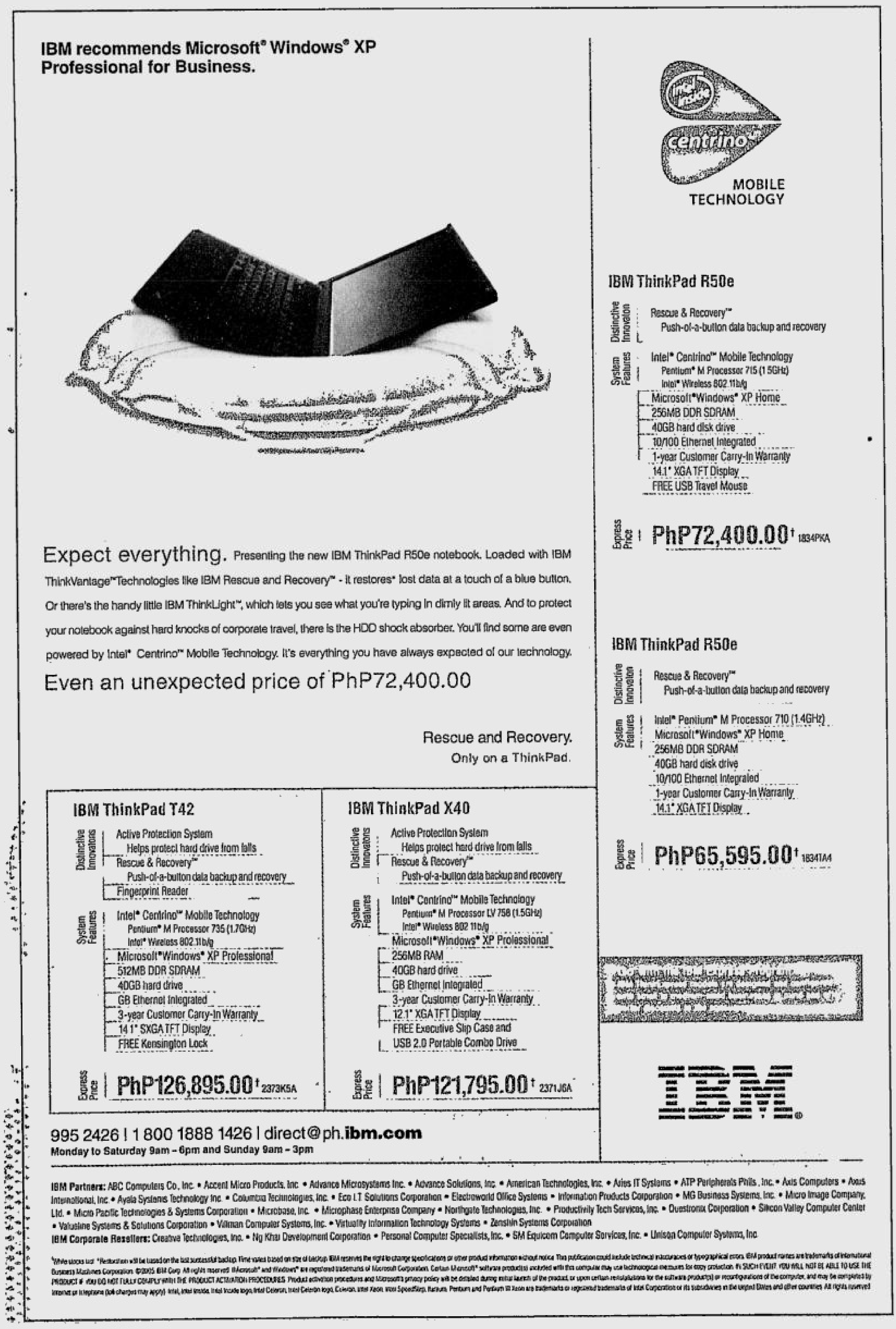

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HIGHWAY CORRUPTION

Truckers ask NLEx execs: Stop mulcting on excess cargo weight

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Owners of trucks plying the 84-km North Luzon Expressway urged Manila North Tollways Corp. officials to stamp out a corrupt practice that, they said, abets violations of the no-overloading law.

The Pampanga Truckers Association (PTA) made the recommendation as the MNTC prepared to enforce the law at the NLEx.

Among truckers, this form of corruption is known as "weekly exemptions."

The scheme required truck owners and operators to shell out protection money on a weekly basis. In exchange, they were exempted from paying fines for carrying excess cargo.

Some members of the Philippine National Construction Corp. patrol teams were behind the racket, the truckers said.

It began after the departments of public works, transportation and communication and interior and local government signed a joint circular for the law, Republic Act 8794 (An Act Imposing a Motor Vehicle User's Charge on Owners of all Types of Motor Vehicles and for Other Purposes), in December 2001. The law was approved in June 2000.

Since traders with excess cargo could afford to bring down hauling cost and consequently, the cost of products, other traders suffered from the competition.

High toll, at P7.47 per km for trucks from P0.81 under PNCC's old rates, have further reduced profits, PTA president Arnold Liwanag said.

Raul Ignacio, MNTC vice president for project controls, said the new NLEx management would not tolerate corruption on the road.

Ignacio urged truckers to report incidents of mulcting.

The PNCC is part of the MNTC joint venture but the NLEx has a completely new management crew on the ground, he said.

A strict enforcement of the no-overloading law seeks to ensure the safety of motorists and maintain good road standards, said Marlene Ochoa, MNTC vice president for public information.

According to the latest agreement with the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Land Transportation Office, officials said the load of every axle should not go beyond 13.5 tons. Axles are the line of wheels in a vehicle.

The penalties include a fine amounting to 25 percent of the motor vehicle user's charge fee. Based on 2004 rates, that can reach up to P1,400 per violation. Violators would also be banned from using the NLEx, Angeles said.

He said mobile patrol teams will check truck loads anywhere in the entire stretch of the NLEx through portable axle-weighers.

On toll, Ochoa said truckers, as frequent users of the NLEx, could avail themselves of a 15-percent discount by using a badge which looks like a credit card. They could accumulate rebates over time through the use of the badge, which is valid for two years.

"As in any business, we know that truckers need to achieve productivity in operations with more revenue and less costs," Ochoa said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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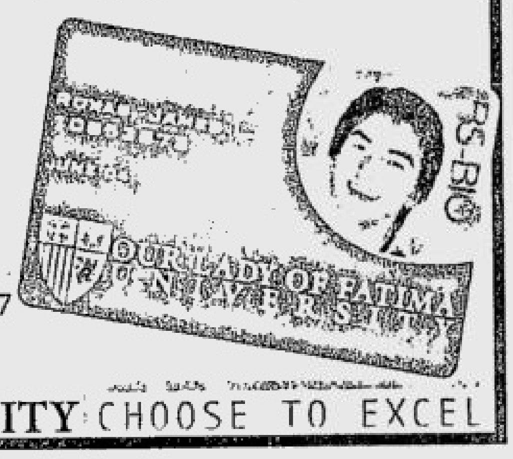
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April 28
Opening of National Bangus Congress & Exhibition
101 Ways to Cook Bangus
Bangus ed Karosa

April 29
Bangus Rodeo
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April 30
Kalutan ed Dagupan
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German cardinal is elected pope

From page A1

ing that began when the 115 cardinals sequestered themselves into the Sistine Chapel late Monday for their conclave.

The 265th pontiff in the Church's 2,000-year history has the heavy burden of guiding its 1.1 billion followers into a new era fraught with moral dilemmas and dissension over a host of issues ranging from emptying pews to contraception and celibacy.

John Paul II, in rewriting the rules for the election, wrote in 1996 that his successor should not refuse that burden.

"I also ask the one who is elected not to refuse, for fear of its weight, the office to which he has been called but to submit humbly to the design of the divine will," he wrote in the Apostolic Constitution.

God's burden

He added: "God who imposes the burden will sustain him with his hand, so that he will be able to bear it. In conferring the heavy task upon him, God will also help him to accomplish it and, in giving him the dignity, he will grant him the strength not to be overwhelmed by the weight of his office."

The new pontiff is then fitted into his robes—traditionally, three sizes are prepared.

A short while later, the traditional announcement is made, in Latin, from the balcony of St Peter's basilica, ending with the words "habemus papam!"—"we have a pope!"

The new pope has a difficult task filling the void left by John Paul II—the third longest-reigning pontiff in the Church's history, who died April 2 aged 84—and also dealing with the complex problems that piled up unresolved under the last pontificate.

Papal legacy

He left behind a legacy as a champion of human dignity, democracy and world peace but also as a strong advocate of conservative values that did not always chime with the Catholic rank-and-file and many clerics.

John Paul II's unique stamp on the papacy earned him the sobriquet of the "people's pope" due to his ability to connect with people of every faith, both in person—he travelled to a record 129 nations—and through masterly use of the media.

His death sparked a huge outpouring of public grief as millions of pilgrims packed Rome and 200 state leaders and other dignitaries attended his funeral, watched by many tens of millions more around the world.

Many of the mourners called for his swift canonization as a saint, an issue likely to be one of the first on the new pope's desk.

Confusing smoke signals

The bells rang after a confusing smoke signal that Vatican Radio initially suggested was black but then declared was too difficult to call. White smoke is used to announce a pope's election to the world.

"It's only been 24 hours—surprising how fast he was elected," Vatican Radio said, commenting on how the new pope was elected after just four or five ballots.

More pilgrims were pouring into St. Peter's Square, and the bells were still pealing 10 minutes after the original tolling.

After the death of John Paul II, cardinals had faced a choice over whether to seek an older, skilled administrator who could serve as a "transitional" pope while the church absorbed John Paul's legacy, or a younger dynamic pastor and communicator—perhaps from Latin America or elsewhere in the developing world where the church is growing.

New challenges

While John Paul, a Pole, was elected to challenge the communist system in place in eastern Europe in 1978, the new pontiff faces new issues: the need for dialogue with Islam, the divisions between the wealthy north and the poor south as well as problems within his own church.

These include the priest sex-abuse scandals that have cost the church millions in settlements in the United States and elsewhere; coping with a chronic shortage of priests and nuns in the West; and halting the stream of people leaving a church indifferent to teachings they no longer find relevant.

Under John Paul, the church's central authority grew, often to dismay of bishops and rank-and-file Catholics around the world.

Even though John Paul appointed all but two of the men who elected the new pope, it was no guarantee that the new man would necessarily be in his mold.

Revolutionizing the church

Pope John XXIII was 77 when he was elected pope in 1958 and viewed as a transitional figure, but he called the Second Vatican Council that revolutionized the church from within and opened up its dialogue with non-Catholics.

The new pope will have to decide whether to keep up the kind of foreign travel that was a hallmark of John Paul's papacy, with his 104 pilgrimages abroad.

The new man may be locked into one foreign trip—the mid-August Catholic youth day gathering in Cologne, Germany. John Paul had agreed to visit and organizers have already spent millions of dollars (euros) in preparations. *AP, AFP, Reuters*

First Papal address

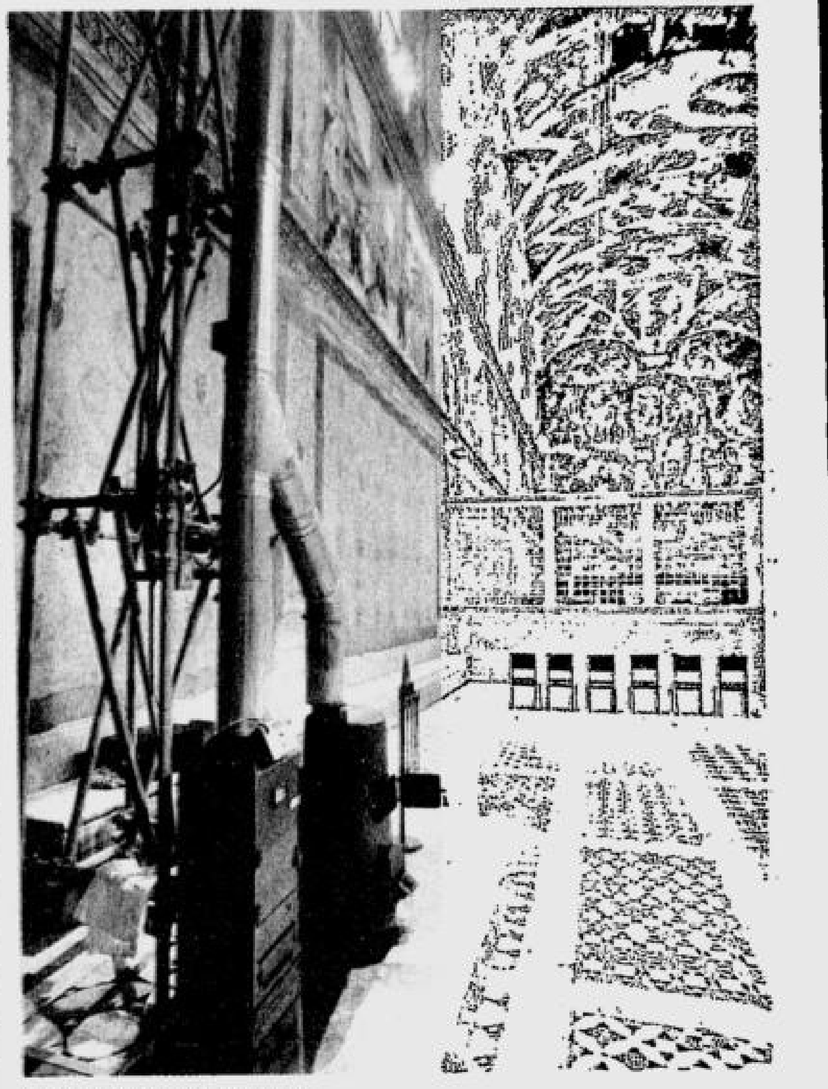
VATICAN CITY—Following is the text of Pope Benedict XVI's first address to the world after being elected as pontiff on Tuesday.

The following is an unofficial translation of the Italian:

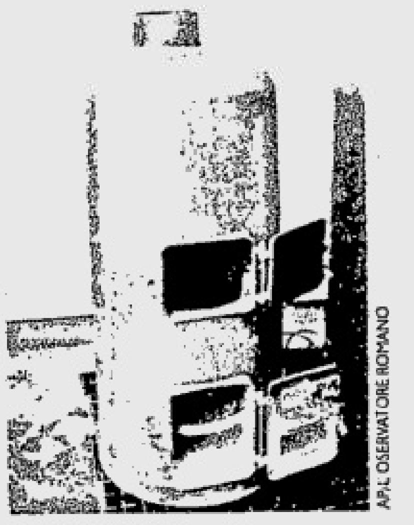
"Dear brothers and sisters, after the Great Pope John Paul II, the cardinals have elected me, a simple, humble worker in the Lord's vineyard.

"I am comforted by the fact that the Lord knows how to work and act even with insufficient instruments. And above all, I entrust myself to your prayers.

"With the joy of the risen Lord and confidence in his constant help, we will go forward. The Lord will help us and Mary his most holy mother will be alongside us. Thank you." *Reuters*



THOUGH DUSTY and full of ashes, this is the stove that made history. AFP



CLOSE-UP of the stove where the ballots to elect a new pope were burned in the Sistine Chapel.

AP/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

State prosecutor to BIR: Probe Brothers Mike, Eddie

From page A1

special treatment. No special investigation should be done on a specific group."

The BIR recognizes the Department of Justice as crucial to the success of its RATE program because it is the prosecutors who are tasked to pursue tax evasion cases in court.

"If we are going to investigate for the purpose of determining whether the right taxes are being paid, then it should be done uniformly for all organizations [and] all individuals, regardless of their religious affiliations [or] their stature in the community," Fadullon said.

He added: "Once and for all, let's set it straight. If there have been mistakes in the past, now [the BIR is] trying to do something. And I think it's worth giving the BIR a chance."

Velarde and Villanueva were not available for comment yesterday.

But in a phone interview, Mel Robles, Velarde's former spokesperson and now chair of the Light Railway Transit Authority (LRTA), said El Shaddai was not tax-exempt.

What is exempted from paying corporate taxes is the non-profit and non-stock foundation put up by Velarde, Robles said. He did not name the foundation.

He begged off from further talking about Velarde, saying he resigned from El Shaddai when he assumed the LRTA post. He gave the number of a Sister Carol, but no one answered the phone despite repeated calls.

Tax-exemption parameters

But Fadullon said that in going after influential religious leaders, it was important to ascertain certain things.

"There has to be a specific allegation of their activities, wherein you can show that these activities are outside the primary and secondary purpose for which the non-profit, non-stock corporation was established," he said.

Profits made by non-stock organizations are tax-exempt only if these do not benefit individual members and go directly to financing the purpose for which they were established, such as religious, educational or cultural activities, Fadullon explained.

If the activities go beyond the parameters for tax exemption, and "if it can be shown that they really derive income from it [apart from that] used to further the running of the church or the organization," then these influential leaders will be asked to pay taxes, he added.

'Not absolute'

In a radio interview, BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno yesterday reminded church and religious groups that their tax-exempt privilege was "not absolute," and that they should pay taxes for their commercial activities.

Parayno told radio dzBB that some Catholic dioceses were not paying "uniform" taxes, and "so we have to make letters of authority and assessments of the different archdioceses."

"But we should not see this as something alarming because, as I have said, there is no issue," he said. "They file tax declarations, so every now and then we remind them. If in the process of tax mapping, we see [church establishments] not paying, then we issue an assessment."

Parayno also said the BIR would soon arrest a businessman in the telecommunications business in connection with the alleged non-payment of taxes for business transactions amounting to P1 billion.

He did not name the businessman pending the DOJ's filing of a case in court. He said the BIR submitted the information of tax evasion to the DOJ last year.

But Fadullon named the businessman as Jimmy Gaw, who is accused of not reporting income from the sale of more than P1 billion worth of mobile phone cards.

"We will file the case against him within the week," Fadullon said.

Following jurisprudence

The Church, however, is looking to the Supreme Court as far as the imposition of taxes on its purported commercial operations is concerned.

"We follow the jurisprudence on the matter," said Msgr. Hernando Coronel, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

"The Supreme Court has already ruled on the tax exemption of religious articles. And we're not only speaking on behalf of Catholics but of other religions as well," he said.

Coronel cited the tribunal's rulings contained in the book "Church and State Law and Relations in the Philippines."

One ruling dated April 15, 1958, restrained the Manila city government from collecting a license fee from the American Bible Society, a non-profit religious corporation that sold religious articles at prices lower than the actual cost.

The tribunal said the group "was not engaged in the business of selling such merchandise for profit."

It said the fee stipulated in Ordinance No. 2592 could not be enforced on the group "without impairing its free exercise of religious freedom and worship and the resultant right of dissemination of religious information."

Cemetery, hospital

The tribunal also ruled that the La Loma Catholic Cemetery was exempt from paying realty taxes owing to its "religious character."

"Whatever income is derived from the operations of the cemetery does not insure to the benefit of private individuals, but is dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of the cemetery," it said.

In 1958, the tribunal resolved another case involving the St. Luke's Hospital of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Tax officials had sought to impose taxes on supplies and equipment donated to the hospital from abroad, arguing that the hospital was not a charitable institution because it was admitting paying patients.

Charitable character

But the high court ruled: "The mere fact that the St. Luke's Hospital admits paying patients does not divert it from [its] charitable character ... if its funds are devoted exclusively to the maintenance of the institution." *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

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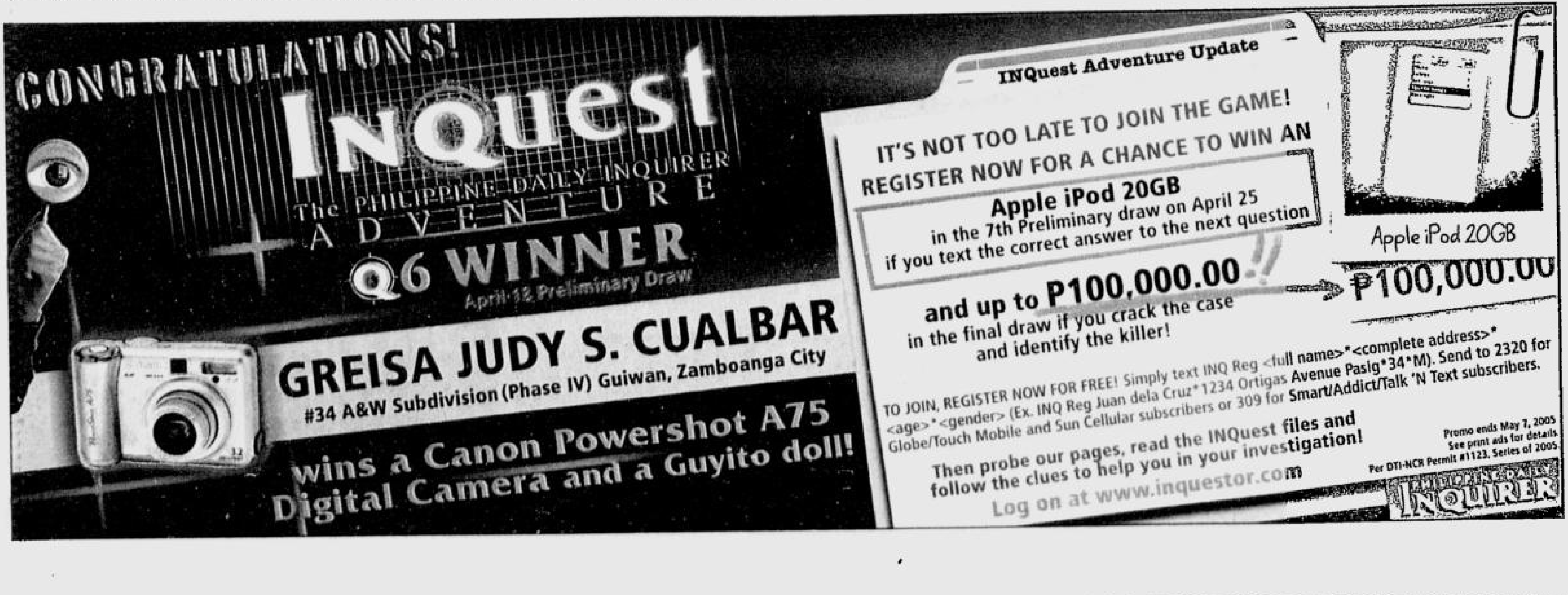

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LTFRB runs after strikers

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE LAND Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) yesterday threatened to revoke the franchises of jeepney operators who abandoned their routes during the nationwide strike on Monday.

LTFRB chair Maria Elena Bautista said the quasi-judicial agency would summon more than 1,000 franchise holders who joined the strike and paralyzed public transport all over the country.

At the same time, Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza directed the LTFRB to act on the petition of jeepney groups for a fare hike within 10 days.

Fare hike seen

By the first week of May at the latest, the agency should have granted the jeepney groups' request to increase the minimum from P5.50 to P8.

The Office of the Solicitor General, which represents the public in the issue of fare increases, is expected to submit its position paper to the LTFRB this week.

Jeeps are asking for a P2.50 increase for the first four kilometers, and an additional 25-centavo adjustment in the fare per kilometer.

Ordinary buses in Metro Manila sought a P3 fare increase for the first five kilometers, and 60 centavos for each additional kilometer.

Bautista said the agency would deal with the fare hike petition separately from the franchise violations of those who joined the strike.

The LTFRB could suspend the licenses and even revoke the franchises if it could prove that the jeepney operators committed violations, she added.

MMDA eyes more emergency bays

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FROM mid-lane loading platforms to mid-road emergency bays.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is planning to set up more emergency bays on Metro Manila's major thoroughfares.

"Apart from the ones on Edsa, we would be putting emergency bays on other roads," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in a press conference.

He said these would be built under the Seven Major Roads Improvement program.

Emergency bays on Edsa are slots carved on its center islands, where stalled vehicles or those involved in accidents could be temporarily parked.

Beleaguered motorists may use the mid-road spaces even without the assistance of MMDA traffic enforcers.

Such emergency parking slots have been opened in front of Nepa Q-Mart in Cubao, the Santolan flyover off-ramp close to Main Avenue, in front of Robinson's Apartelle just past Guadalupe Bridge, and in front of SM Megamall.

"If you have a flat tire, your car stalls or you meet an emergency, you can park there," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center executive director.

However, he added, "But you cannot just park there for nothing, or else you will be apprehended."

The MMDA has also put up emergency stations at the Edsa-East Avenue and Edsa-Ortigas Avenue intersections. These stations have a field office and quick reaction vehicles and crew that could immediately respond to road emergencies.

Since removing road obstructions had been a thrust of the agency to speed up traffic under its road improvement program, the MMDA is surveying Metro Manila's major thoroughfares to see where it could put up more emergency bays.

"We are going to put more emergency bays on portions of roads where there are wide center islands," MMDA Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna told the INQUIRER.

Lacuna added, "It [emergency bay] helps us a lot because stalled vehicles can park there and not disrupt traffic while waiting for a tow truck."

Among the roads being surveyed by the MMDA for possible emergency bay spots are R-10 Road in Tondo, Manila, MacArthur Highway in Valenzuela, Quezon Avenue in Quezon City, Marcos Highway going to Rizal, and C-5 Road, which traverses Pasig and Makati City.

"[The putting up] of emergency bays is one of the components of the Seven Major Roads Improvement [project], along with the construction of loading and unloading platforms and footbridges," said Lacuna.

A P4.3-billion budget has been allotted for the road improvement projects, the effects of which could be felt by Metro Manila residents by the end of the year, the MMDA said.

In line with its goal of improving traffic flow, the MMDA has begun constructing loading platforms between the two bus lanes on certain portions of Edsa. These are meant to speed up loading and unloading of passengers and limit buses to the two outer lanes.

Justice for
LANOT
KATARU
MAYOR
ITIGIL
SA PA
KAY
NOT
ITIKA

SUPPORTERS of Henry Lanot demand justice for the former Pasig City representative who was gunned down inside a crowded restaurant last week.

ERIK ARAZAS

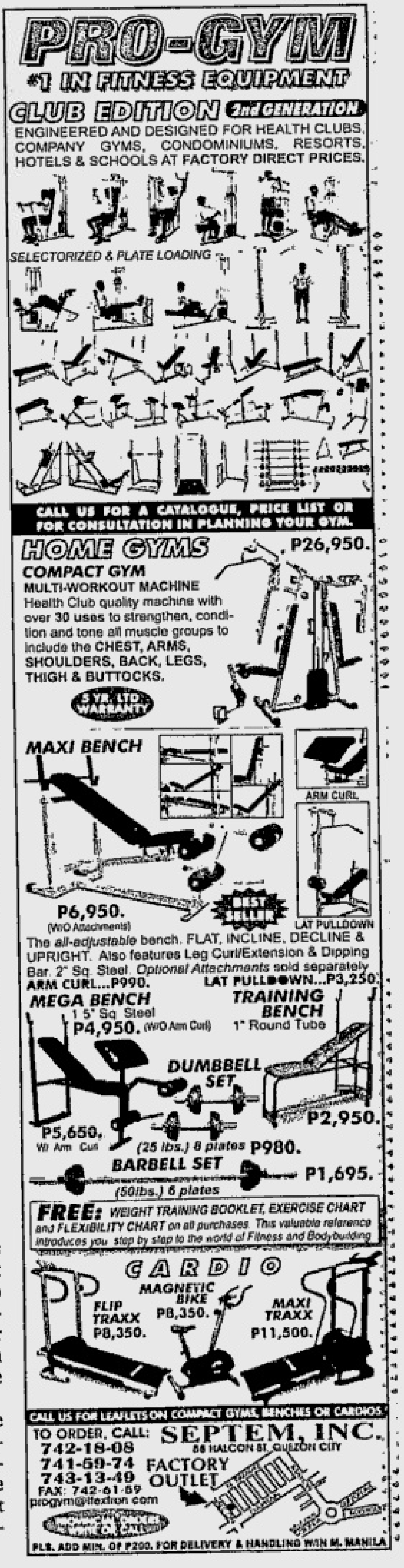
Re-entry proves costly for tourist

By Leila B. Salaverria

THIS Swiss national apparently loved the country so much that he sneaked back in after being deported and placed on the immigration blacklist two years ago.

But the feeling was not mutual. The Bureau of Immigration arrested Zoltan Blatter, 39, last week after it learned he had re-entered the country on March 3 despite being barred from doing so. He would be deported again.

Immigration authorities arrested Blatter in June 2003 for running a radio station in Puerto Galera, Mindoro, without a permit. The Swiss national had also been overstaying in the country at that time because his tourist visa had expired in December 2002.



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'No ECC needed for park'

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANILA city government yesterday said it saw no need to secure an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) to construct a building for teachers inside the disputed Arroceros Forest Park.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, city legal counsel Melchor Monsod said the city government sought a Certificate of Non-Coverage and not an ECC because the area used to be an office compound, and not a forest park where the Department of Education (DepEd) used to be located until it transferred to Pasig City.

With the DepEd's relocation, the Manila DCS bought the property using the Special Education Fund, Monsod added.

Edgardo Manda, general manager of the LLDA which is authorized to decide whether or not the city government could proceed with the project, earlier said they had received an inquiry from the Division of City Schools (DCS) in Manila concerning the forest park, but not a formal application for an ECC.

"If the DepEd did not need an ECC then, why will it need one now?" Monsod said.

Winner Foundation, the environmental organization taking care of the forest park, is opposing the construction of the building, saying the move would result in the destruction of trees and lush foliage inside what it called Manila's "last lung."

Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, said they welcomed the investigation to be conducted by the LLDA to determine if the construction equipment inside the property was meant for the building.

Lanot son vows to pursue dad's struggle

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WITH grief in his eyes and rage in his voice, the eldest son of murdered former Pasig representative Henry Lanot vowed to continue what his father started.

Lanot was buried yesterday as an Army reservist surfaced and claimed that he was part of the plot to kill the former congressman.

The National Bureau of Investigation is checking out his claims.

Also, Pasig City police director Senior Supt. Raul Medina had gone on leave to pave the way for an impartial investigation into the murder.

Speaking after emerging from the mausoleum where his father was buried, Ken Lanot declared, "*Ipagpapatuloy ko at tatapusin ang laban na sinimulan ni Daddy* (I will continue and finish the fight my father started)."

His declaration elicited cheers from hundreds of supporters who gathered at the Pasig City Public Cemetery.

Asked if he would join politics, Ken said, "*Malamang* (Most likely)."

Lanot, who was gunned down inside a Pasig City restaurant last Wednesday, was laid to rest yesterday after a three-hour funeral march that turned into a big indignation rally to condemn his killing.

Hundreds of supporters, allies and relatives in attendance had red ribbons tied around their arms.

"The ribbon is the symbol of our fight for justice," Lanot's younger brother Grover told the INQUIRER during the march.

From the Arlington Chapel, Lanot's coffin was transferred to the Santa Clara de Montefalco Church across C. Raymundo Street yesterday morning.

During the mass, some of the more than a thousand people inside the church held candles.

Wife breaks down

Lanot's wife Zenaida, who was seated with their three sons and only daughter, remained composed from the start of the Eucharistic celebration but broke down near the end.

After the Mass, some supporters broke into tears as they lined up to the main altar to take one final look at Lanot inside his dark blue coffin.

The coffin was opened for a few minutes and Lanot's mother Marcosa, 80, slowly walked to the coffin and kissed her son on the forehead.

Lanot was very close to their mother, Grover said.

A loving son

The former congressman would drive his mother to Mindoro Oriental whenever she would go home after staying with her sons in Metro Manila, Grover added.

The funeral march started at about 10 a.m.

From the church, the about 500-meter long convoy of people walking, tricycles and cars, turned left to Kalinangan Street in Barangay Caniogan.

Lanot's children, along with hundreds of his supporters, walked behind the funeral car and braved the intense summer heat throughout the march.

Many supporters carried pictures of the slain congressman, the same they used during his campaign for mayor last year.

Others carried banners demanding justice.

A red streamer, hung in front of the funeral car, read: "*Ituloy ang Laban. Katarungan Para Kay Henry Lanot. Itigil ang Madugong Pulitika sa* Pasig (Carry on with the fight. Justice for Henry Lanot. Stop the bloody politics in Pasig)."

Several times the supporters yelled "Lanot, Lanot" while forming the letter "L" with their fingers.

Allies and supporters maintained that the killing was politically motivated.

"Politics was behind the killing. My father had no other enemies," Ken told reporters.

Lanot served as Pasig City congressman for two terms. Last year, he ran for mayor but lost to Vicente Eusebio.

Lanot challenged Eusebio's victory in court. The case is awaiting resolution.

Eusebio's camp has denied insinuations they were behind the murder.

Councilor Bobby Eusebio, the mayor's son, announced that the city government would offer a P100,000 reward for information on Lanot's killer.

This is on top of the P100,000 reward the National Capital Region Police Office had earlier announced. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Margaux C. Ortiz*

Fire hits Napolcom office; records intact

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IT WAS a test their building—and agency personnel—fortunately passed.

Looking at the brighter side, officials of the National Police Commission (Napolcom) said the fire that hit a room in their headquarters yesterday brought out a couple of good things about their building and security personnel.

"I am glad that after an inspection following the incident, we learned that our electricity lines were in excellent condition, because the fire was just contained in that room. And when I met with the security guards today, what I did was commend them because they did very well," said Napolcom vice chair and executive officer Imelda Roces.

A 15-minute fire hit a small conference room at the third floor of the six-story Napolcom building on Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, around 1 a.m. yesterday.

Bernardo Calibo, Napolcom director for personnel and administrative service, said security guards noticed smoke coming out of the room inside the Planning and Research Service office during a routine check.

Sensing that fire had started inside the room, the watchmen then quickly grabbed fire extinguishers strategically placed all over the building, and rushed to douse the fire. Even before firemen arrived, the guards had successfully put out the fire.

Calibo said the fire was sparked by an electric fan that office personnel had failed to turn off. The agency's employees had been dismissed earlier yesterday so they could catch a ride home in view of the transport strike.

"No sensitive records like documents pertaining to promotions and demotions of policemen and administrative complaints lodged against erring law enforcers were destroyed," said Roces.

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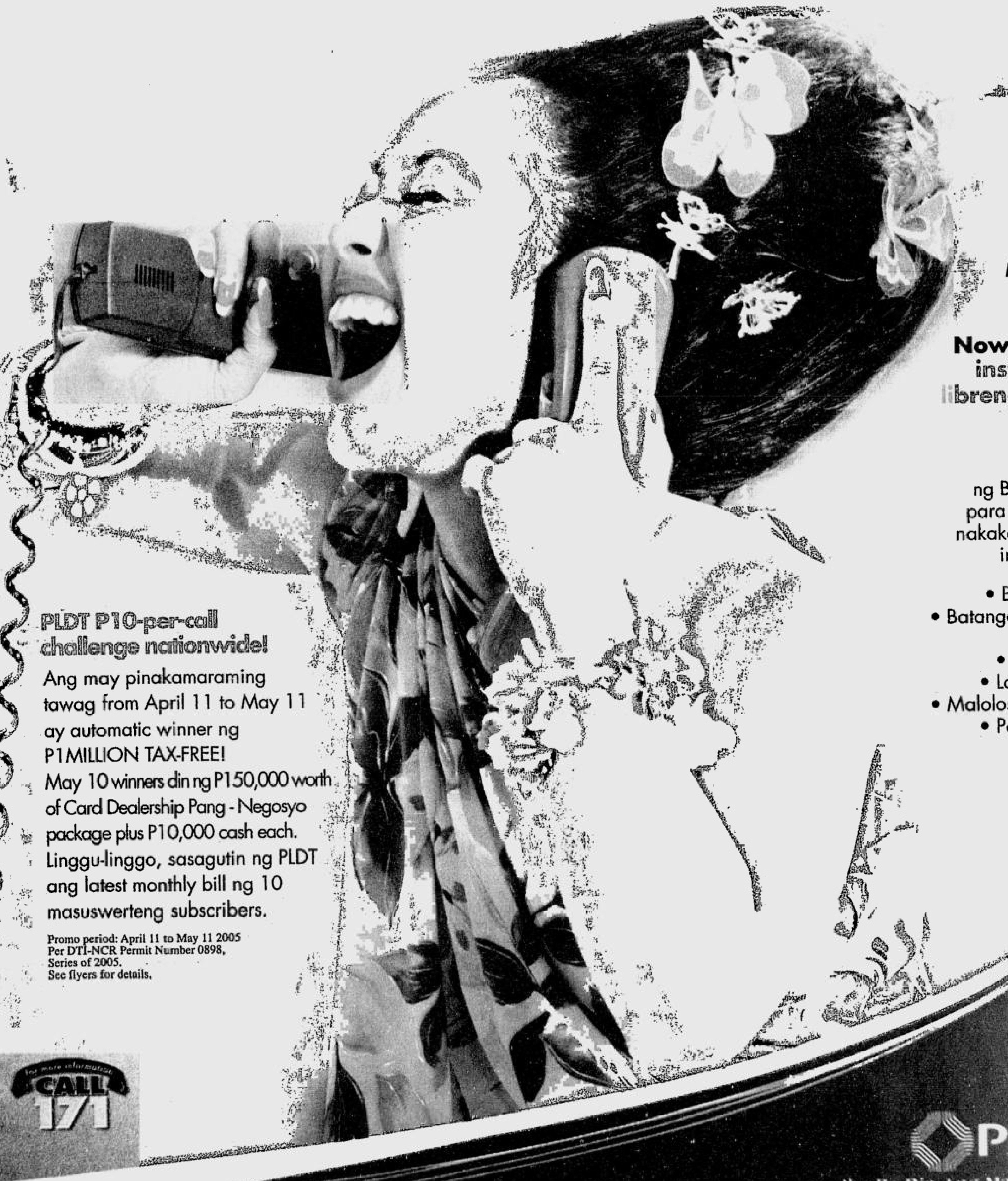

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POC rocks basketball landscape

Committee out to form stronger RP five

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE NATIONAL squad that was put to shame by a ragtag team that included actors and comedians may soon be out of the big picture.

And so is the embattled basketball official on whose lap the debacle was laid by those who also claim to have a major stake in the conduct of the national team.

In two plans of action recommended by Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday, the ill-fated SEA Games-bound RP team will be dismantled in favor of a national team coached by Chot Reyes, and a basketball committee will effectively clip the powers of BAP secretary general Graham Lim.

The Philippine Basketball Association, through its commissioner, Noli Eala, supported the idea and pledged to make the league's players available for inclusion to the RP team that will initially see action in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) championships in June.

The results of yesterday's meeting at the Cojuangco residence in Forbes Park, Makati, sent tremors across the basketball landscape.

Lim, who is fighting the deportation order issued against him by the Bureau of Immigration, attended the session along with national coaches Boyzie Zamar and Johny Tam.

They agreed to cooperate with the wishes of Cojuangco, Eala, Philippine Basketball League commissioner Chino Trinidad and the officials of major collegiate leagues.

Asked about his opinion regarding the formation of the super group to be named "RP Basketball Committee," Lim meekly replied: "Whatever you say."

He did not elaborate.

Eala said the league's schedule may permit it to represent the Philippines in the Seaba tournament, which also serves as qualifying for the Asian championships in Doha, Qatar, this September.

"The PBA will help and we are studying it very closely," said Eala, who noted that by the time the Seaba rolls in, the PBA will already be in its semifinal phase, where only four of the 10 member teams will be left competing.

"That leaves us with six teams to choose the players from."

If that plan pushes through, it will render useless the national team bankrolled by Cebuana Lhuillier that got humiliated by a virtual pick-up squad recently, triggering yesterday's damage-control meeting.

Cojuangco noted the wisdom in utilizing the PBA's training team in that it is also the professional league that will field a squad to the Qatar tournament.

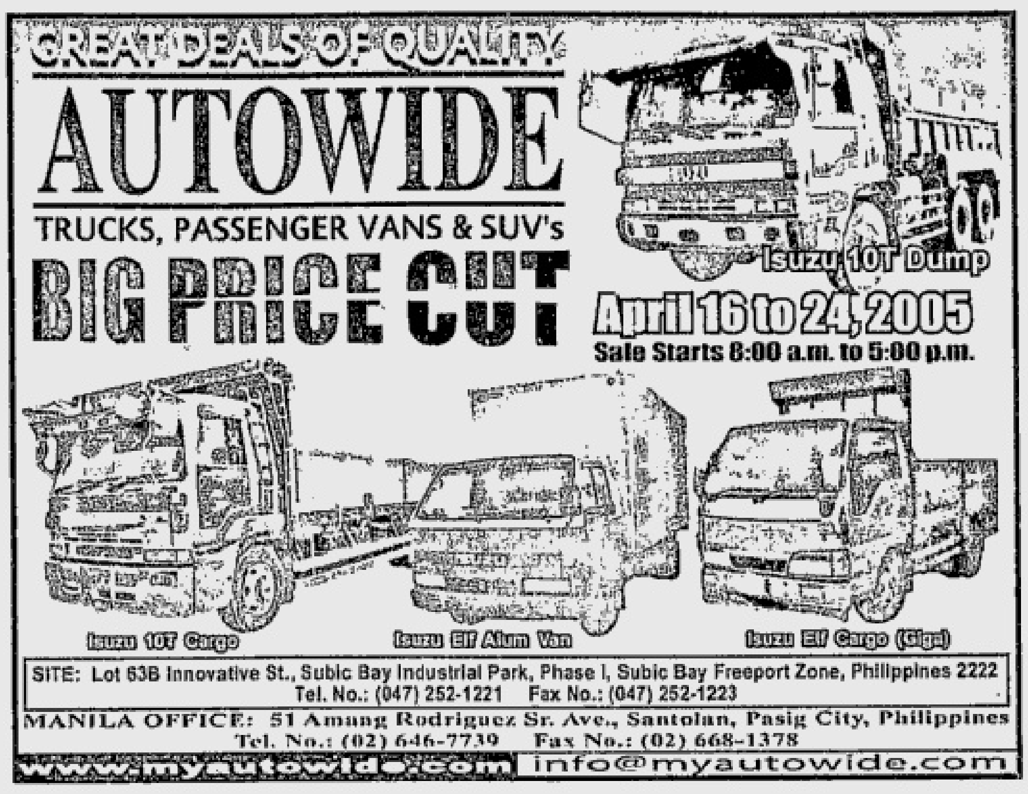
Cojuangco is set to chair the new basketball committee, whose members will include Eala, Lim, Tan, Trinidad, POC official and basketball patron Go Teng Kok, Cebuana Lhuillier head Jean Philippe Lhuillier, POC chair Robert Aventajado, former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino, former Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) secretary general Moying Martelino and Lito Alvarez of cargo giant Air21.

Former Project: Gintong Alay boss Joey Romasanta was named secretary general of the committee.

The POC feels that the Team B of the national training team, currently being honed by Reyes, will be better prepared for the Seaba tournament since it has had a solid three-week training.

"Even if we pick the best players in all the leagues for the Seaba, it would be asking a lot from them to win the title considering that it's only less than two months to go," said Cojuangco after the two-hour meeting.

Reyes agreed with the idea and promised to work out a solution. He already has a 20-player roster in the ABC-bound national training pool.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Embattled Hotdogs eye end to 4-game skid vs Beermen

CLASHING head-on with a team it failed to hurdle the past six meetings, Purefoods cannot afford to take another beating.

Coach Ryan Gregorio swears the timing is unacceptable, especially now that the TJ Hotdogs are carrying the emotional luggage of a four-game setback.

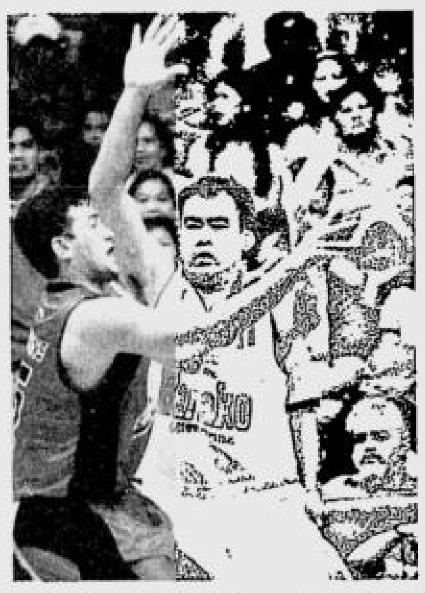
These factors, along with the fear of plummeting down the cellar, will push Gregorio and the TJ Hotdogs to seek redemption when they meet the San Miguel Beermen today in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference.

"We must find a quick solution to stop it," said Gregorio after the TJ Hotdogs bowed to Alaska, San Miguel, Sta. Lucia Realty and Talk 'N Text in succession.

"Otherwise, we might fall into a deep pit from which it will be difficult for us to recover," he added.

Safety measures will certainly come once the Purefoods' locals get their act together and Antonio Smith begins to refine his free-throw shooting.

Though he's been topping the statistical sheets in rebounding, the 6-foot-8 Smith was horrendous on the free-throw line, at least in the last two games where he shot three of 10 from the charity stripe.



ALASKA'S Bong Hawkins opts to pass off Red Bull's Nelson Asaytono during their game Sunday. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

There's also a phenomenon called "law of averages" which the TJ Hotdogs will come into effect against the Beermen, who remain unbeaten against Purefoods since the 2003 Reinforced Conference.

In their initial face-off this conference, San Miguel thrashed Purefoods in an out-of-town sortie, triggering a long drought for the TJ Hotdogs that led to a 4-5 record.

But for the Beermen, it will just be another game they should play to maintain a stranglehold of the lead after winning six of their last nine games. San Miguel's recent victims were the FedEx Express.

The Express seek to make up for that stinging loss to the Beermen when they face the rejuvenated Coca-Cola Tigers in the other game at 7:35 p.m.

Sporting a 3-5 card with the Tigers, the Express are hoping to alter a downward trend the past two games. The Tigers, on the other hand, are itching to recover from an overtime debacle against the Alaska Aces in Bogo, Cebu, last week. *June Navarro*

INQGOLF-HSBC TILT

On the tee: Clash of club champs

Inquirer Golf and Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. (HSBC) have teamed up to stage the inaugural National Tournament of Club Champions on May 24-29 at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Some 40 private and public clubs have expressed interest to participate in the grand showdown, which was launched Monday night at the Conservatory of the Manila Peninsula.

During the affair, HSBC president and chief operating officer Warner Manning announced a package of prizes for the winners of the men's and ladies play, including the chance to witness two of the world's biggest tournaments.

Manning said HSBC will send the champion in the Ladies' Division to the HSBC Women's World Match Play Championships in New Jersey this June. The event features the world's top 60 professional lady golfers, including the Philippines' very own Jennifer Rosales, who will vie for the top prize of $500,000.

The winner in men's action will be a special guest of the 2005 HSBC World Match Play Championship at Wentworth Club in England slated in September this year.

"This also marks the start of what I hope will be a long-term partnership with our friends in the local golfing industry," said Manning. "With the Inquirer, I must say this is just but one of the many programs we have been undertaking together."

Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez exhorted the participants to train hard and aim for victory at the giant Eagle Ridge complex.

The event is being held in coordination with the Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines, with Omega watches as a major sponsor.

Officials of major organizations in golf, Admiral Luisito Fernandez (National Golf Association of the Philippines), Richie Garcia (Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines Inc.), Nancy Ortiga (Women's Golf Association of the Philippines) and Raoul Lachica (Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines) were on hand to pledge their support to the event.

The launch was also attended by golf managers and golf directors.

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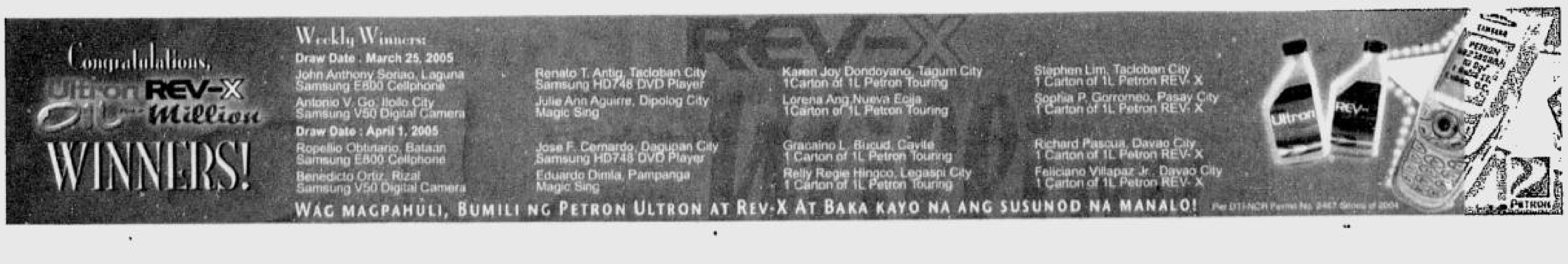
Congratulations, Ultron REV-X Oil Million WINNERS!
Weekly Winners:
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John Anthony Soriao, Laguna
Samsung E800 Cellphone
Antonio V. Go, Iloilo City
Samsung V50 Digital Camera
Renato T. Antig, Tacloban City
Samsung HD748 DVD Player
Julie Ann Aguirre, Dipolog City
Magic Sing
Karen Joy Dondoyano, Tagum City
1Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Lorena Ang, Nueva Ecija
1Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Stephen Lim, Tacloban City
1 Carton of 1L Petron REV- X
Sophia P. Gorromeo, Pasay City
1 Carton of 1L Petron REV- X
Draw Date : April 1, 2005
Rogelio Obtinario, Bataan
Samsung E800 Cellphone
Benedicto Ortiz, Rizal
Samsung V50 Digital Camera
Jose F. Cemardo, Dagupan City
Samsung HD748 DVD Player
Eduardo Dimla, Pampanga
Magic Sing
Graciano L. Bucud, Cavite
1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Relly Regie Hingco, Legaspi City
1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Richard Pascua, Davao City
1 Carton of 1L Petron REV- X
Feliciano Villapaz Jr., Davao City
1 Carton of 1L Petron REV- X
WAG MAGPAHULI, BUMILI NG PETRON ULTRON AT REV-X AT BAKA KAYO NA ANG SUSUNOD NA MANALO!
PETRON

MENK: Under suspicion

AMERICAN MOTHER?

Solon wants DOJ to probe Menk

REP. EDUARDO Zialcita (1st District, Parañaque) urged yesterday the Department of Justice to make public the documents submitted by basketball player Eric Menk to support his claim to Filipino citizenship in light of reports that Menk was born to an American mother.

"Reports were given in confidence to this representation that the mother of Menk, the former Lucia Padua, became a naturalized US citizen on July 9, 1971 in Cleveland, Ohio," said Zialcita.

"Since Menk was born on Aug. 24, 1974, then he was born to an American mother. If this is so, then Menk has no rightful claim to Filipino citizenship under the provisions of the 1973 Constitution."

The lawmaker asked the DOJ to investigate Menk and check if Menk had submitted documents attesting to the Filipino citizenship of his mother at the time of his birth.

Zialcita also dared Menk to submit the naturalization papers of his mother to the DOJ, the Bureau of Immigration and the PBA.

"If Menk was born an American and is only claiming to be a Filipino just to be able to play in the PBA, then he should be prosecuted and deported if proven guilty in a court of law," Zialcita said.

Baguion keys Montaña win

MICHAEL Holper of Bacchus battles Toyoto's Richard Alonzo for the loose ball. RUDY ESPERAS

GAMES TOMORROW
(St. Placid Gym, San Beda)
2 p.m.—Welcoat vs Bacchus
4 p.m.—Nenaco vs Granny Goose

By Jasmine W. Payo

FROILAN Baguion redeemed himself in overtime, nailing a running jumper with barely a second left as the unbeaten Montaña Pawnshop nipped Welcoat Paints, 88-86, yesterday to grab the solo lead in the PBL Unity Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Baguion, who finished with 16 points, couldn't wrap it up for the Jewels in regulation, muffing both his free throws with 11.6 seconds remaining to give the Paintmasters five more minutes to breathe.

Welcoat grabbed possession and Paolo Orbeta then buried a three-pointer with nine-tenths of a second remaining to force the extra period, 77-77.

Jon Dan Salvador topscored with 20 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for the Jewels' fourth straight triumph.

"Welcoat is a strong team and they're capable of coming back," said Montaña coach Robert Sison. "Both teams have championship experience *kaya dikit ang laban* (that's why it's a close game)."

Earlier, Ron Capati and Mark Macapagal teamed up for 34 points as Toyota Otis-Letran snapped its two-game skid by downing Bacchus Energy Drink, 78-70.

"We're still looking for back-to-back wins," said coach Louie Alas, after the Knights joined Magnolia Ice Cream in fourth spot at 2-2. "We're still not playing consistently."

Welcoat fell to second place along with Harbour Centre at 3-1.

Alex Compton and Baguion shot key triples in overtime to give the Jewels an 85-79 edge. But a Paintmasters rally capped by an Anthony Washington triple cut the lead, 85-84, 29 seconds left.

After Paul Guerrero split his charities to pull the Jewels two clear, 86-84, Orbeta scored on a layup with 7 ticks left to square the contest at 86.

Baguion, however, rose to the occasion this time and buried the game-winning basket.

The scores:

First Game

TOYOTA OTIS 78—Capati 18, Macapagal 16, Coronel 11, Oreta 8, Daa 6, Piñera 6, Alonzo 4, Tagupa 4, Larong 3, Enrile 2, Andaya 0, Tajonera 0, Mondragon 0.

BACCHUS 70—Hubalde 19, Holper 14, Abadia 9, Vizcarra 8, Menor 6, Epondulan 4, Uy 4, Cruz 4, Te 2, Butel 0, Coyukang 0, Cordero 0.

Quarters: 28-17, 46-30, 55-49, 78-70

Second Game

MONTAÑA 88—Salvador 20, Baguion 16, Juntilla 12, Compton 11, Capus 11, Vergara 5, Espiritu 4, Dela Cuesta 3, Mercado 3, Guerrero 3, Bono 0.

WELCOAT 86—Najorda 23, Washington 18, Dy 12, Coching 10, Tan 7, Orbeta 7, Ortiguerra 4, Junio 3, Reyes 2, Guevarra 0, Gamboa 0.

Quarters: 24-14, 43-35, 58-64, 77-77, 88-86 (OT)

MY GAMES

Young splashers strut stuff

PRODIGIOUS talents plunge into action today as the much-awaited swimming event kicks off in the 4th Manila Youth Games at the Emilio Aguinaldo pool.

The pool competitions, one of the centerpiece events in the meet among the Big City's finest 17-and-under athletes, start at 6 a.m.

"There are many medals at stake here that's why the athletes are expected to give their best and haul as many as they can," said Ali Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and head of Manila Sports Council.

Ball games took center stage yesterday with defending champion Villegas High handily scoring its second straight victory in boys' 17-under baseball with an abbreviated 16-0 win over Youth Development Bureau in three innings at the Rizal Memorial Ballpark.

In the 16-17 category of boys' volleyball, District 4-C survived Santa Ana, 25-18, 25-22, while District 144 overcame a weak start to repulse San Andres, 15-25, 25-19, 25-16.

Barangay 144 notched its first victory in girls' play at the expense of District 4-B, 24-26, 26-24, 25-23, even as District 4 and District 5 both won by walkover in the weeklong multi-event games supported by Red Bull, San Miguel Corp., Globe, Solar Sports, Super Ferry, Milo, Itrasports, Concept Moves, Philippine Sports Commission, Air21 and Pagcor. Marc Anthony Reyes

Italy five arriving Thursday

A YOUNG and tall Italian team, handled by the assistant national coach, will be the initial test case for the RP-FIBA Asia Men's basketball team when the first of two scheduled three-day pocket tournaments kicks off Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Stranges Papo Movie, consistent strong finisher in various European Leagues, including the Super Cup which it won last year, will arrive on Thursday for the tourney featuring a team from Iran and coach Chot Reyes' national training pool, to be divided into two squads.

Handling the Italian team is Andrea Annese, who brought the squad to the national finals two years ago and was an assistant in the bronze medal team during the European championship in 2001.

Comprising Pirelli Stranges Papo Movie team, named in memory of its patron Riccardo Stranges and sponsored by Pirelli are: Marco Balzarotti, Oscar Bordin, Marco Beppato, Angelo Casellato, Stefano Cislaghi, Matteo Marmonti, Oscar Mazzocco, Fabrizio Meda, Marco Rho, Aleandro Erminio and Garry Panganiban.

Reyes has yet to come out with the RP team lineup and would use this pocket tournament to help narrow down his choice from among two dozen hopefuls.

Yee takes early lead

MICO Yee gunned down three straight birdies from the 10th on the way to a three-under-par 69 and a four-shot lead in boys Class A even as siblings Wolen and Princess Superal pulled away in their respective divisions at the start of the Samsung Jungolf Tour's Junior World qualifier at the Canlubang north course.

Yee posted nines of 35-34 to lead Aaron Dimabuyu, Matthew Manotoc and the fancied Tonton Asistio by four in the tournament kicking off a grueling 108-hole elimination for slots to the Junior World this July.

Superal shot a solid 72, giving him a seven-stroke advantage over Cebu's Jan-Jan Ybanez.

Princess Superal scored a 64 and ended the day leading Dana Gonzales by 19.

Dottie Ardina had a 76 and leads Class C rival Maan Legaspi's 80.

Velasco-Cruz prevails

LIPA CITY—The Ricky Velasco-Errol Cruz tandem fired a final round 86 over the weekend to win the overall championship of the Liberica Golf Invitational, Club Malarayat's annual member-guest tournament.

Velasco-Cruz pulled away with its splendid final round effort as a total of 300 players making up 150 teams played in all three nines of the sprawling complex, which will be the site of the 2005 Philippine Open.

Don Montenegro and guest Antonio Mendoza ruled Division I play with a 158 total on a course made difficult because of the winds. Mark Mendoza-Lawrence Negrido checked in second, one point behind, beating Najie Gapangada-Dennis Panganiban via countback.

Luis Ilagan, who teamed up with Mario Gamboa for third place in Division III, won the individual overall title in the event backed by Citimotors and Turf Company and supported by San Miguel, United Auctioneers, Asia International Auctioneer, Master Sports and Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez.

Riviera golf tomorrow

THE 2005 RIVIERA Invitational gets underway April 21-24 with over 400 members and guests pitting their golfing skills against each other to claim ownership of the coveted Invitational trophy.

The event will be played on the Langer and Couples courses, giving the players a chance to test the challenges of the Silang, Cavite Club.

With Smart Communications as the main sponsor, the Riviera Invitational will be putting up a Ford Everest as a hole-in-one prize on all the par 3s, while Asiana Airlines and Turf and Solahart will also be pitching in hole-in-one prizes. Mizuno will be the lead equipment sponsor while other sponsors are Casino Filipino, Pioneer Insurance, Ford Alabang and Dynamic Sports.

A Ford Lynx will be raffled off during the awarding ceremonies to be held in the Barrio Fiesta motif.

PADILLA discusses the mechanics of the NBC which opens on April 23. With him are Tito Palma, Panasonic's Darwin Banez and Coach Boysie Zamar.

NBC: Bigger, better

"IT'S going to be bigger and better this time," NBC (National Basketball Conference) president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla said of the country's premier regional league yesterday at the Manila Pavilion Hotel.

Padilla guested in the weekly public service program sponsored by Red Bull, Circure, Supermax and Pagcor together with NBC secretary general Tito Palma, Panasonic Phils. marketing communications manager Darmin R. Banez and RP-Cebuana Lhuillier head coach Boysie Zamar yesterday to officially launch the cagefest.

"From eight teams last year, we now have 12. We'll be playing all over the country. As in the past, we expect our games to be played before SRO crowds," said Padilla.

For his part, Banex said Panasonic has committed to become NBC's title sponsor anew "as part of our commitment to help in sports development all over the country."

"We were able to achieve our goals through NBC," said Banez.

Teams vying in the NBC which opens on April 23 at the Cuneta Astrodome are defending champion Tribu Sugbu, Parañaque Jets, Laguna Spring, Baguio Cardinals, Forward Taguig, Iloilo Warriors, Ozamiz Cotta, Cagayan de Oro Stars, Valencia Golden Harvest, Iligan City Crusaders and Cebuana Lhuillier, as guest squad.

The Jets and the Spring of Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro will clash in the opening match.

Palma took the occasion to correct reports that the Parañaque Jets of actor/TV host and Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana "is a ragtag team."

While Richard Gomez, Antonio Aquitania and Jomari Yllana are included in the Jets' roster, the three did not play in the finals where Parañaque beat the national squad, added Palma.

Even Zamar admitted that the RP team lost to a strong squad, bannered by ex-PBA players Bong Alvarez, Rollie Basilides and Jovy Sese. "Besides, the RP team is still undergoing tryouts. It's not the final lineup," Zamar said.

SPORTSWATCH

Palaban kicks off Luzon elims in Iba

THE NATIONAL Kickboxing Federation of the Philippines launches the search for the country's male and female representatives to the World Kickboxing Championship by staging its Luzon eliminations in Iba, Zambales, on Saturday at 5 p.m. The Federation, headed by five-time kickboxing champion Abegail Francisco Jr., aspires to send the first batch of Filipino kickboxers to Ontario, Canada, where the World Kickboxing Championships will be held from Nov. 5-10. Dubbed Palaban Luzon, the event will precede the Palaban Visayas on May 21 at the SM Cebu Entertainment Plaza and the Palaban Mindanao at the SM Davao Atrium on June 25. The championship, Palaban Pilipinas, will be held on July 30. These events will be aired on RPN 9 on July 1, Aug. 5, Sept. 2 and Oct. 7, at 10:30-11:30 a.m. For inquiries, call Ma. Esperanza Tinio Garcellano, 0917-8144592, 687-7996 and 632-0790.

New Balance Power Race May 29

THE NEW Balance Power Race fires off May 29 with the country's finest long and middle-distance runners vying for honors in the event starting and ending at Fort Bonifacio Global City. Eduardo Buenavista is expected to be back to defend the crown in the premier 25K event which also serves as part of his preparation for this year's Southeast Asian Games. Rio de la Cruz, fresh from his sixth place finish in the Queenstown Half-Marathon in New Zealand last week, will lead the battle for top honors in the 10K Open. Jerome Berredo, who bested Ben Alejandrino and Michael Gutierrez for the crown last year, is the runner to watch in the 5K run while age-group competitions are on tap in both the 25K and 10K events. A 10K run is slated among corporate teams. The races will start at 5:30 a.m. "It's amazing that the number of attendees have been increasing every year," said Ronnie Colmenar, marketing manager of New Balance exclusive distributor Planet Sports, in the PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion where the event was formally launched.

COLMENAR

Roligon derby lures champions

ROLIGON Mega Cockpit's Game Ka Na Ba 5 – Cock Derby, slated April 30, May 2, 4 and 6, has attracted a bevy of champions. Wewe Burgos of Batangas and Jeric Junio of Bulacan, co-champions in the recent Roligon Anniversary Derby, were among the latest to join. Also in the list are Col. Tabique, Vic Angeles and James Uy who shared the championship of Filcobra Grand Championship 5 – Cock Derby last Saturday. As of yesterday, reservation of cockhouses is nearing the 200 mark. The champions are guaranteed to receive P2 million while the fastest win champ will drive home an imported Izusu Big Horn (4 X 4). Meanwhile, the "Ratratan 4 – Cock Derby" elimination round is set on Saturday. Entry fee is P3,300 but the guaranteed prize is P1 million. All Ratratan qualifiers will face one another during the championship round on Monday. For details, contact 833- 2275, 833-1638 and 852 --9812.

INQBOX

Question of the Week

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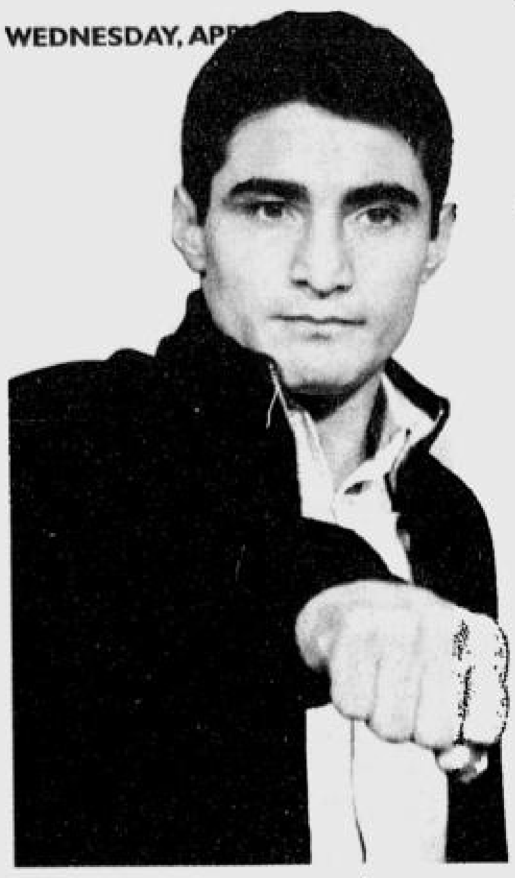

MORALES: Not keen on rematch

Arum still fancies Morales-Pacquiao II

TOP Rank head Bob Arum, main promoter of the March 19 Erik Morales-Manny Pacquiao bout, prefers a rematch between the Mexican legend and the Filipino idol over a fourth installment of the Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales rivalry.

Arum, in an interview with Las Vegas Review Journal's Kevin Iole yesterday, said that he would rather see Morales take on Pacquiao again because he believes "it will perform better in pay-per-view."

"The Filipinos add a huge twist to this equation," Arum told Iole, in reference to the record-shattering 350,000 buys generated by the recent fight.

"The delay on HBO for Pacquiao had a larger-than-usual audience," Arum said. "So many people watched that fight and are still talking about it. The delay for Morales-Barrera was nothing out of the ordinary. Having the fight on Thanksgiving weekend was not the best time, but my analysis is that everybody who watched Morales-Barrera watched Morales-Pacquiao, plus we added the Filipinos."

Earlier, Arum had hinted that he might put Morales and Pacquiao in a double-header against separate foes in September, then follow it up with their rematch later this year. Arum was apparently unaware of Morales' recent pronouncements that he plans to move up in weight and face Diego Corrales next.

Arum, however, said he can only carry out his plans after Pacquiao's legal situation has been cleared, noting the feud involving Pacquiao's handlers Shelly Finkel, trainer Freddie Roach and their lawyers against promoter Murad Muhammad and Rod Nazario. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

PACQUIAO: Aching for revenge

Epson 'A' favorites bag titles

MELODY Villaceran and Jojo Hipolito played true to form while Alex Cuevas and Renel Bernaldo survived their opponents to capture the Epson Cup 2 badminton championship doubles' crown during the weekend at the Greenhills Badminton Center.

Installed as heavy favorites, Villaceran and Hipolito easily disposed of Kathy Kuan and Cathy Escasinas, 15-7, 15-7, to bag the ladies' doubles Class A title.

In contrast, Cuevas and Bernaldo had anxious moments before throwing off Gabby Nepomuceno and Jeff Tablante, 15-10, 15-5, on their way to the men's doubles Class A plum.

But while the results in the elite classes came out as expected, the matches in Class B produced a pair of king-sized upsets during the event sponsored by Shell, Chowking Madison Square, Fitness First, BHM, PBNet and Yehey.com.

Sanctioned by the Philippine Badminton Association, Epson Cup 2 is also supported by Wilson, Citibank, Apple Center, Konica, Mizuno, UNO Magazine, Badminton Philippines, Ridgewood Hotel-Baguio, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT.

OTHER CHAMPIONS: Jhun Adarna and Orly Amil (men's Class B), In the ladies group, Mafi Basit and Bing Mejia repulsed pre-tournament favorites Joy Balcita and Debbie Madrid, 15-9, 1-15, 15-4, to crown themselves Class B doubles champions. Erwin Valencia and Raoul Gonzales (men's Class C), Helen Tam and Jean Kho (ladies Class C). Malou Santos and Jennifer Soriano (ladies Class D), Badette Domingo and Pepa Ramos (ladies Class E), Geraldo Signio and Ghino Lorenzo (men's Class D), Rowin Cahanding and Mir Ignacio (men's Class E), Ui Mendoza and JV Madrid (mized doubles, Class B), Cielo Regino and Wally Yonson (mixed doubles Class C), Ynez Veneracion and Mark Delgado (mixed doubles Class D), Pia Antonio and Andrew Garcia (mixed doubles Class E).

Barton Villa bags Enthusia Grand Prix

By Michael A. Dar Santos

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) --- Filipino race driver Barton Villa, driving a Renault, won the Enthusia Grand Prix of New Zealand by 3 seconds Sunday to move into first place in the Asia Pacific drivers' championship. Villa began the day 5 seconds ahead of double regional champion Vincent Rebillon of Australia and managed to nearly maintain that advantage to post his fourth consecutive win this season.

ENTHUSIA Grand Prix Asia Pacific Drivers Champion Barton Villa (center)

Villa's win is expected to please his father and fellow sportsman, former Filipino racing champion Jaime Jr. who was diagnosed with liver cancer and hospitalized a month ago. "Survival of the fastest… that's what my dad always says. Dad, I offer this win to you," the younger Villa said during the post-race drivers interview following the podium awarding ceremony.

VILLA: Season's fourth consecutive win

Despite Villa's win, Rebillon has lodged a complaint to the race organizers to summon Villa about some reckless swerving in the tracks. There were two instances of near-collision involving Villa. "Hey, it's a race. I was just defending my racing line. If they can't take it, they shouldn't compete at all," Villa reacted. Enthusia is considered by most racing enthusiasts as the ultimate speed paradise. Almost all of the licensed vehicles of over 40 car manufacturers participate in Enthusia.

For previous chapters, log on to www.inquestor.com
To answer the question in Chapter 10, text INQ Q<question #> <answer> (Ex: INQ Q1 E) to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk 'N Text subscribers. Maximum of 3 text answers per question. Send in your answers by April 23 to qualify for the preliminary draw on April 25.
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RACING TIPS

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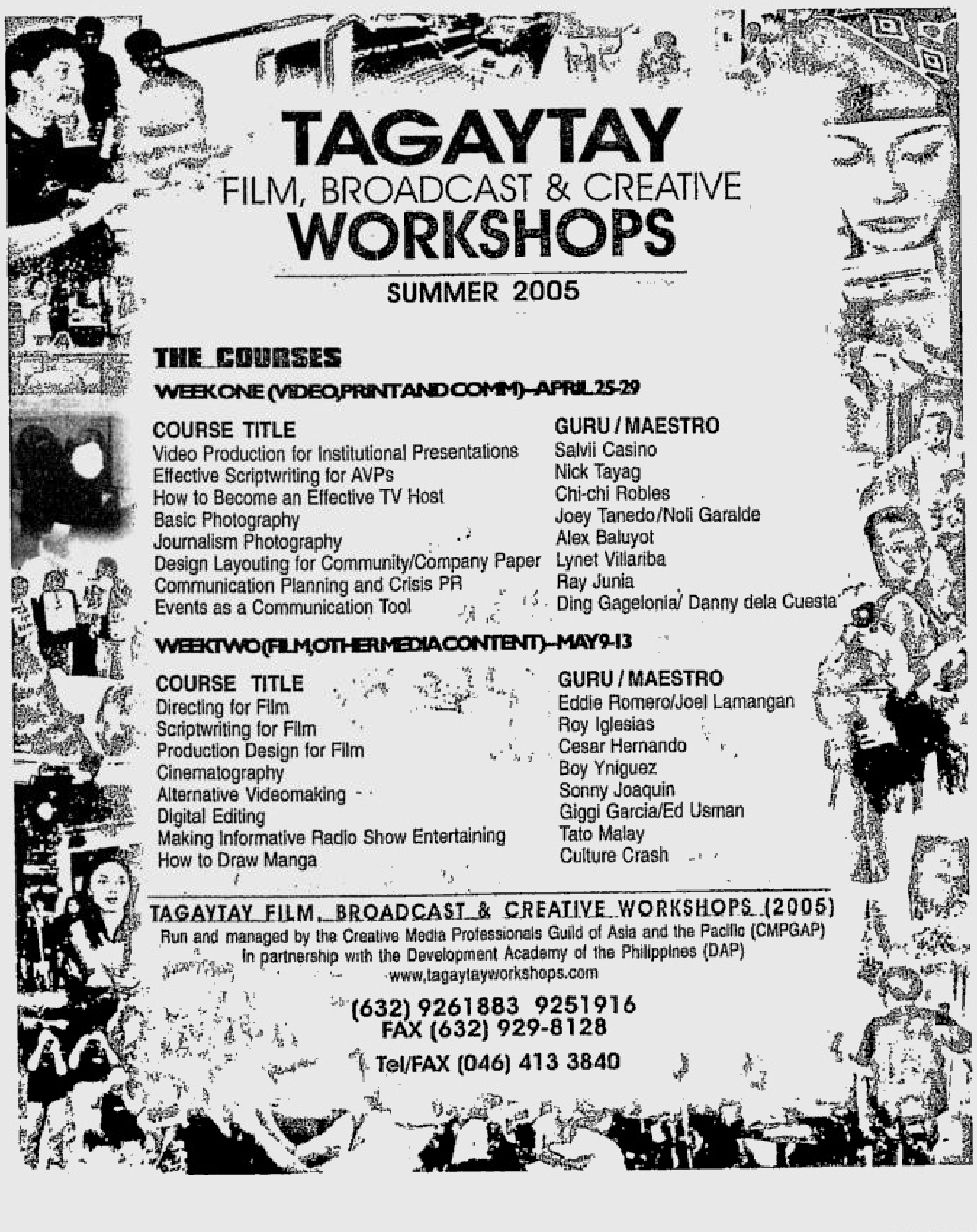
Race 2—1. Gigi's Gold 2. Yonder Girl 3. Rikitik 4. Sea of Galilee
Race 3—1. War Alert 2. Ahoy My Boy 3. Golden Lance 4. Friendly Venture
Race 4—1. Fantasia 2. Queen of Gaia 3. Dynamic JL 4. Beauty and Grace
Race 5—1. Real Material 2. Lakambini 3. Red Thunder 4. Amuridik 5. Smiling Jaeda
Race 6—1. Tiger Song 2. Luck of the Irish 3. Tres Jeune 4. Commodore Tiger
Race 7—1. Korek Ka Dyan 2. Lance 3. Dark Beat 4. El Cid 5. Motivation
Race 8—1. Presidentiable 2. The Magician 3. Manila Slew 4. Silver Cho Cho 5. Mas Que Nada 6. Mercurian

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BILLIARDS: San Miguel Asian 9 Ball Tour, Jakarta Leg; 11:30 a.m. (r); STAR Sports—See Efren 'Bata' Reyes capture his fifth Asian 9 Ball Tour title.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



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SUMMER 2005

THE COURSES

WEEK ONE (VIDEO, PRINT AND COMM)—APRIL 25-29

COURSE TITLE	GURU / MAESTRO
Video Production for Institutional Presentations	Salvii Casino
Effective Scriptwriting for AVPs	Nick Tayag
How to Become an Effective TV Host	Chi-chi Robles
Basic Photography	Joey Tanedo/Noli Garalde
Journalism Photography	Alex Baluyot
Design Layouting for Community/Company Paper	Lynet Villariba
Communication Planning and Crisis PR	Ray Junia
Events as a Communication Tool	Ding Gagelonia/ Danny dela Cuesta

WEEK TWO (FILM, OTHER MEDIA CONTENT)—MAY 9-13

COURSE TITLE	GURU / MAESTRO
Directing for Film	Eddie Romero/Joel Lamangan
Scriptwriting for Film	Roy Iglesias
Production Design for Film	Cesar Hernando
Cinematography	Boy Yniguez
Alternative Videomaking	Sonny Joaquin
Digital Editing	Giggi Garcia/Ed Usman
Making Informative Radio Show Entertaining	Tato Malay
How to Draw Manga	Culture Crash

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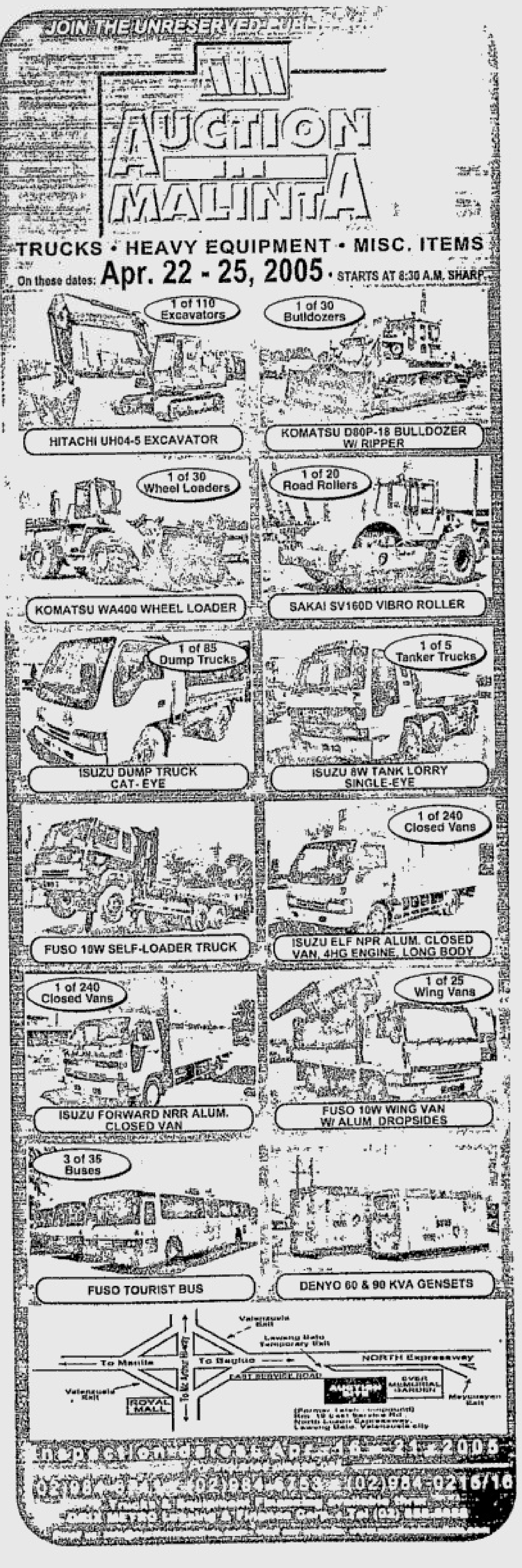

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1 of 20 Road Rollers — SAKAI SV160D VIBRO ROLLER
1 of 85 Dump Trucks — ISUZU DUMP TRUCK CAT- EYE
1 of 5 Tanker Trucks — ISUZU 8W TANK LORRY SINGLE-EYE
FUSO 10W SELF-LOADER TRUCK
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1 of 240 Closed Vans — ISUZU FORWARD NRR ALUM. CLOSED VAN
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An ugly theater begging for an end

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT'S pure poetic justice what has become of Graham Lim's tragi-comic reign as sec-gen of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).

Am typing this down three hours before the basketball stakeholders' meeting called by POC President Jose Cojuangco in Makati yesterday.

But let me state this, otherwise I might end up blaming myself.

I wish the Philippine Olympic Committee had exercised its powers to restore sanity in the BAP by causing the resignation of Lim.

I also wish the POC had taken time out to properly thank the team headed by actors Richard Gomez and Anjo Yllana.

It was hard to imagine how an obscure team built around an actor-comedian tandem shocked and shamed the squad Lim had peddled as the proper national amateur basketball team.

But if Gomez, Yllana & Co., who must've reported to the title game straight from an all-night studio shoot, played below par and failed to expose the wormy, stinking result of Lim's stint as amateur basketball program operations officer, our national team would've gone into the Southeast Asian Games campaign with one foot in the grave.

* * *

It's both cheap and funny how Lim's coaching staff, headed by Boysie Zamar, had tried to save its neck by stating there was nothing seriously wrong in losing this early.

Zamar had been saying it was just fine for a team to fall so it could discover and correct its deficiencies. Unfortunately for Zamar and Lim, Cojuangco, a battle-tested politician, is too seasoned to get swayed by platitudes.

Cojuangco, to repeat, has refused to leave anything to chance.

The POC chieftain obviously remembers the national displeasure caused by the defeat suffered by the RP National team at the hands of the unheralded Indonesian team spearheaded by Soni Hendrawan in Yokohama in 1964.

That stunning setback prevented the RP team from moving into the basketball championship series of the 1964 Tokyo Olympiad.

It led to widespread uproar and a subsequent Senate investigation.

Of course, there's a bigger reason why Cojuangco wanted a winner—right now.

The SEA Games cage title will be disputed on Pinoy turf.

True enough, there were enough worthier entities, headed by the Philippine Basketball League, that have offered to take the cudgels.

* * *

Meanwhile, Lim, holder of a Taiwanese passport, has bought enough rope to tie around his neck.

Many times, the embattled BAP sec-gen, ordered deported last week after the court confirmed he had faked his Filipino citizenship, could partly be likened to the biblical traitor who hanged himself after the ultimate betrayal.

Lim, however, appeared to be made of stranger stuff.

Lim did not only disobey the advice of his chief benefactor, Go Teng Kok, to step aside and provide space for a solution to the basketball mess he himself has caused.

While it would be proper to offer repentance, Lim is obviously trying to project himself as the sacrificial lamb.

It's not beyond the character of this alien to dig into his sly bag and claim he's the (basketball) savior being crucified.

At least, the end to Lim's sordid theater appeared imminent as we went to press.

Iverson puts Sixers back in NBA playoffs

Suns clinch homecourt postseason edge

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson had 39 points and 12 assists, and Kyle Korver scored 19 points to lead Philadelphia back into the postseason for the first time in two years with a 122-106 victory over Milwaukee on Monday night.

The Sixers, who blew a chance to clinch a playoff spot a day earlier by losing in New Jersey, raced to a 22-point lead and won for the seventh time in nine games and 10th in the last 15.

Philadelphia (42-39) can finish, sixth, seventh or eighth in the Eastern Conference depending on how Indiana, Cleveland and New Jersey fare in their final two games. If Chicago beats Indiana on Wednesday and the Sixers beat Atlanta, Philadelphia would earn the No. 6 seed.

Desmond Mason had 22 points for the Bucks and Dan Gadzuric added 21 points and a career-high 20 rebounds.

In Phoenix, the Suns clinched homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs before the first quarter against Denver ended Monday, then went on to blow out the Nuggets, 128-114.

Joe Johnson scored 18 of his 26 points in a 44-point first quarter for the Suns, who shot 71 percent (17-for-24) in the quarter to take a 19-point lead.

The Nuggets didn't get closer than 12 points again, and that came in the final minute of the Suns' fifth straight victory. It was a win Phoenix didn't need to clinch the best record in the NBA, and the resulting homecourt postseason edge, because San Antonio lost at Memphis in a game that ended just when Suns' onslaught was gaining steam.

Amare Stoudemire scored 26 points in the Suns' 62nd victory of the season, tying the franchise record set by the 1992-93 team that made it to the NBA Finals.

Carmelo Anthony scored 33 points for the Nuggets, who lost two straight for the first time since George Karl became coach on Jan. 28. The loss cemented Denver in the No. 7 spot in the Western Conference and a first-round series against San Antonio. Phoenix plays Memphis in the first round.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Mike Miller scored 28 points, including a 22-footer at the buzzer as the Grizzlies nipped San Antonio, 94-92.

Miller's final shot came from the right wing after the Grizzlies inbounded the ball with 1.4 seconds left. Officials discussed the matter at midcourt for about 5 minutes before referee Steve Javie came to the scorer's table and ruled the basket good.

Memphis coach Mike Fratello said after the game the clock started before Jason Williams inbounded the ball, and the officials ruled Miller would have gotten the ball off on a catch-and-shoot before the horn sounded if not for the inadvertent clock start.

Memphis, which snapped a four-game losing streak with the victory, had clinched the Western Conference's final playoff spot when Minnesota was eliminated with its loss to Seattle on Sunday.

Glenn Robinson, who signed with San Antonio earlier this month, had 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting.

In other games, Orlando tripped Indiana, 92-88; Minnesota edged New Orleans, 102-99; Houston blasted the LA Clippers; Utah whipped Sacramento, 92-82; and Golden State waylaid the Los Angeles Lakers, 126-99.

In Oakland, California, Baron Davis had 24 points and 13 assists and the Golden State Warriors sent the Los Angeles Lakers to their fifth straight loss.

The loss assured the Lakers of finishing with a worse record than the Los Angeles Clippers for the first time since 1993.

Kobe Bryant had 22 points, six rebounds, five assists and six turnovers for the Lakers. *AP*

PHILADELPHIA rookie Andre Iguodala elevates for a dunk. REUTERS

Kenyan accomplishes marathon milestone

BOSTON—Defending champion Catherine Ndereba of Kenya became the first woman to win a fourth Boston Marathon on Monday, and Ethiopia's Hailu Negussie won the men's race to break the Kenyan stranglehold.

Ndereba fell behind by 80 seconds before pulling away from Ethiopia's Elfenesh Alemu in the last five kilometers to win in 2 hours, 25 minutes, 13 seconds. Negussie finished in 2:11:45 to earn the men's $100,000 prize.

Kenyans had won 13 of the previous 14 men's races, but this year they'll have to settle for the unprecedented victory by "Catherine the Great" in the world's oldest annual marathon.

Alemu had a share of the lead from the fifth mile (eighth kilometer) in Framingham, pulling away from the pack before the midway mark. Ndereba pulled even with Alemu about two hours into the race.

They ran side-by-side past Boston College onto Beacon Street before Alemu fell back at Cleveland Circle in Brookline, finishing 1:50 behind.

"I guess she fell from my pace," Ndereba said. "I didn't know if I was going faster or not. As I kept accelerating, I passed all those who were leading." *AP*

Quezon City closes in on Velo leaders

QUEZON City bagged three gold medals and topped one special event while national mainstay Marites Bitbit scooped two golds in Day Seven of the First Philippine Velo Challenge at the Amoranto Velodrome yesterday.

Elixir tried to catch up with two gold medals of its own in the event co-presented by the First Gentleman's Foundation and Air21 (Sagot Ko, Padala Mo!)-Tour Pilipinas Inc., with the rest of the field in the team event going home with a victory each from the 10 races scheduled for the day.

Elite men's Paterno Curtan, Executives' Danny Quirido and Veterans' Candido Quirimit ruled the Keirin races, and Erickson Obosa topped the special event Danish Elimination Race for Quezon City, which crept closer up the team standings with 176 points. Elixir leads with 215, Wescor (1[illegible]), Puerto Princesa City (180), Mayni-LA (177) and Tagaytay International Convention Center (98)

Elixir got two golds courtesy of Bitbit in the women's Elite Keirin and individual time trial (1:05.48)—beating MayniLA's Marita Lucas (1:08.26) and Puerto Princesa's Lakambini Vito (1:12.16)—in the event also supported by Pagcor, the Philippine Sports Commission and Philippine Olympic Committee, Isuzu D Max (the Philippines' No. 1 Pickup), Sharp Phils., San Miguel Corp., Viva Mineral Water, Vittoria Tires, 93.9 iFM, RMN dzXL 558, David's Salon and Intrasports, and aired over dzSR Sports Radio 918 k[illegible]

Jan Paul Morales earned for Tagaytay its gold medal in the Juniors, Antonio Quintos won for Wescor its title in the Masters and Bryan Dimacall got for Puerto Princesa its victory in men's Elite, all in Keirin. MayniLA—composed of Michael Zingh, Noli Borja, [illegible]win Torres and Warren Da[illegible]la—topped the 3,000 meters team pursuit for Executives, Masters, Juniors and Elite men in 3:59.4

Kristanna Loken

This time playing an amazon queen in
RING OF THE NIBELUNGS.

Kristanna Loken, who played the *'Terminatrix'* in *TERMINATOR 3* is back . This time playing an amazon queen in *the two-hour long epic RING OF THE NIBELUNGS,* the Nordic legend that inspired *J.R.R. TOLKIEN* to write *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* trilogy. This $66M German production is the biggest European made feature.

The 5' 11" stunning supermodel- turned -actress has made numerous television appearances on European tv as well as what could be her breakthrough film role in *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003) opposite *Arnold Schwarzenegger,* released in 2003. Kristina is also a martial arts practioner and a yoga instructor in Germany. She will be seen next year in *BLOODRAYNE* based in the popular video game and the sex comedy '10' starring opposite *Colin Farrell.*

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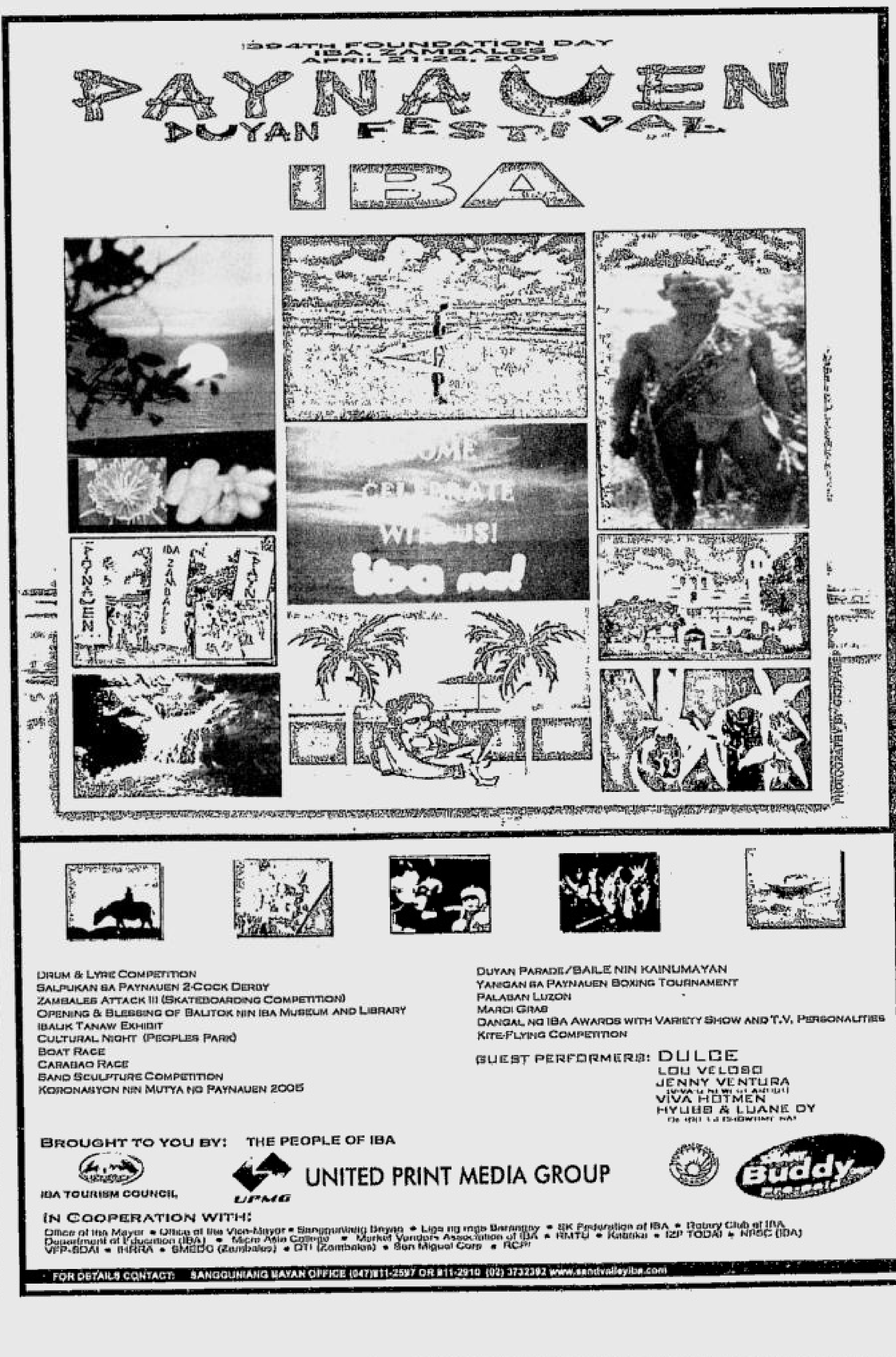

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LAST RIDE

Armstrong to retire, eyes 'Jordan finish'

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Six-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong will retire after bidding for a seventh consecutive title in July, the cancer conqueror hopeful of ending his legendary career as a champion.

AFTER the Tour de France, Lance Armstrong will wave goodbye to professional cycling. AFP

"The Tour de France will be my last as a professional cyclist," Armstrong said. "It will be the last one, win or lose. Having said that, I'm fully committed to winning a seventh title."

Armstrong, defending his crown in the Tour of Georgia stage race that starts here Tuesday, made his revelation three kilometers from where golfer Tiger Woods signaled his return to form by winning the Masters eight days ago.

The 33-year-old American, whose companion is pop-rock singer Sheryl Crow, overcame life-threatening cancer to become the greatest champion in cycling's most famous race but said he wants to spend more time with his children.

"They're at an age where they change daily if not hourly," Armstrong said. "I was away for a month, and I was blown away by the change in their lives. It's time for me not to miss any more key moments in their lives."

Armstrong's reasons for retiring came as no surprise to the head organizer of the Tour de France, Jean-Marie Leblanc.

"We thought he would retire," Leblanc said. "The fact he has to come over to Europe and leave his children behind doesn't surprise us that he has made this decision."

Like Mike

Armstrong dreams of making a Michael Jordan-like farewell, recalling how the basketball star sank a title-winning basket before a retirement.

"That's kind of like a dream for an athlete. We'll see if I can do it. No promises," Armstrong said.

"The passion is there and the will to win one is there. The passion to win the final one is strong and compelling, that desire to go out on top. Whenever I watch sport, I love to watch the guy go out on top. Hopefully I can do that."

However, Leblanc thought it was more the Texan losing his mental toughness than any physical decline that could see his dream of a seventh title finish in disappointment.

"Maybe this weariness will affect his effectiveness in the Tour this year," said Leblanc.

"It is neither a wish nor a hope of mine, simply my analysis.

"He has already shown enough proof of his motivation, his concentration and his pride to make us believe he won't be far off his top form.

"However if he is challenged...," added the Frenchman.

Lack of challenge

Armstrong broke the career record for Tour de France titles last year and admits this year's chance to boost his own mark lacks some of the challenge.

"For me the number seven is different. It doesn't hold the cachet that six did," he said.

Armstrong, who turns 34 in September, noted that he would be the oldest winner in modern cycling if he captures this year's Tour de France.

Armstrong was given only a 40 percent chance to survive in 1994 after doctors discovered he had brain, lung and testicular cancer but he beat those odds and went on to become a US sports celebrity and global cycling icon.

Armstrong's contract with new team sponsor Discovery Channel requires him to race in just one more Tour de France. *AFP*

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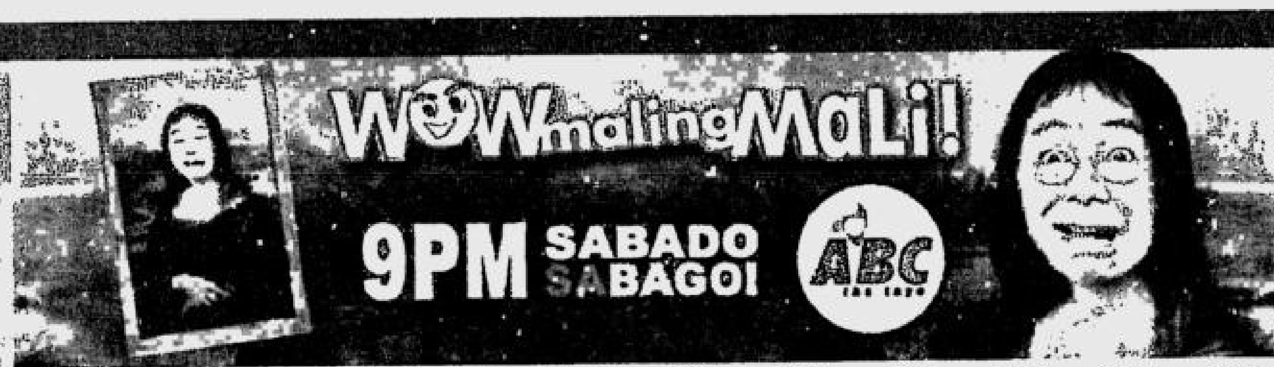
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9PM SABADO SABAGO!
ABC

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10 PM)	Naruto (5:35 PM)	Vidjoking	TV Patrol		Kamao	Krystala	Hiram	Spirits	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	Yes Yes Show		Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Look Who's Talking	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Hungry Heart	Knockout	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Darna	All About Eve (8:45 PM)	Full House (9:15 PM)		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hoy Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Scare Tactics	The Ring	First 48 (Hrs)		Trading Spouses		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Pangako Mo	Cargo For Truth	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Dask	Junior Reyes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Fantastic Four	Static Shock	Godzilla	Incredible Hulk	Stargate SG1		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Combo Nick				Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By, Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Simple Life	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Who Wants To Marry My Dad		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Asog				Mahal Na Kung Mahal				Black Mask 2			Persona	Insiang (9:15 PM)				Magkapatid	
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	C.S.I.			Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN		The Amazing Race 7		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		7 Days (Season III)		Pensacola (Season III)		The Amazing Race 7		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI: NY (Season I)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Philly		JAG		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Showreel Asia		Taboo		Dangerous Jobs		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow/Dogs With Jobs Hero, Mentor, Pringa	Chimp Diaries	About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Showreel Asia		Taboo	
Solar Sports	Women's Volleyball '04				Davis Cup '05 France vs Sweden 1st rd.				The Badminton Masters '05 SFinals				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Washington @ New Jersey					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special 101 Most Shocking Moments		You're Invited	Life & Style		Style Star	Nigella Bites II	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO				The Emperor's Club (3:50 PM)			Quigley (5:40 PM)				Her Alibi (7:25 PM)			The Net				Funny About Love (10:50PM)	
Star Movies		People I Know (3:15 PM)				Tooth			Born On The Fourth Of July					Intrepid			Femme Fatale (10:40PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Powerpuff Girls	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN		Motorsport Asia	LPGA Takefuji Classic NV USA				LPGA Takefuji Classic NV USA				Goals!	Sportscenter Asia	NBA Anthology Down Low: Life in the D-League	2004 WPBA Cuetec Cues Florida Classic		San Miguel Asian 9 Ball Tour			Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			Anthrax			Charade (5:15 PM)					For Love Or Money (7:20 PM)			The Hitcher II: I've Been Waiting			Rollerball (10:35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	The District		Missing		Wedding Daze			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		The District (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Year Without A Summer		Ultimate Guide		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
Sports Plus	MCI Heritage Final Rd						Samsung Radioshack 500 Highlights		Inside the PGA	NBA Game: Boston vs. Cleveland					Bikini Destination	World Poker Tour Ep. 14 C'ships			
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Tak Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival				Paco Park Presents	

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THE FAT 4 is composed of Marco Antonio Esperas, Alan Navarro Udtujan, Simeon Kennedy Choa III and Jose "Chiok" Bunag III.

Fat, fat, fat–fat!

NEVER before has there been a group quite like them—four fat stand-up comedians who can act, sing, dance and host.

They're the Fat 4, who debuted in the live entertainment circuit two years ago.

Tomorrow, they will perform at Ratsky Morato back-to-back with the Freshmen Band; on April 28 they will headline a special show also in the same venue.

The Fat 4 is composed of Marco Antonio Esperas, also known as "Chubbylita"; Alan Navarro Udtujan or "Reggie Jaya"; Simeon Kennedy Choa III or "Sam"; and Jose "Chiok" Bunag III. Rodolfo Flores Lomuntad a.k.a. "Curacha" is the alternate member.

They perform regularly at Metro Manila's top comedy bars, including Punchline, Metro Bar, Laffline, Basilica, Funline and 22nd Street.

The group was inspired by F4 (which explains the choice of name). It was Eddie Ong, owner of Funline—where the quartet used to perform as separate acts—whose idea it was to put them together. At the time, the Taiwanese boy group was all the rage. The four comics incorporated scenes, jokes and gags from the show into their regular routine, making them an instant hit.

Call 4335301.

DJ Katakana

Vodka Ice presents the British worldwide sensation DJ Katakana, a.k.a. Jools, in a progressive hard house live set and party at Embassy in Fort Global City on Saturday, April 23.

With over 13 years of experience behind the decks and in the studio, Katakana has performed in legendary clubs in Britain and Europe, such as Renaissance, Venus and Golden. He also presided at the Football World Cup parties in Paris.

Katakana was first known as Jools, when he became the first foreigner to perform at Club xiii in Moscow. He was such a hit in the leading Russian venue, so he returned there for once a month, in three years.

He toured Russia's major cities and remains one of the very few western deejays who have performed in Siberia.

His ability to fuse state-of-the-art technology with tribal progressive sounds won critical acclaim as he produced albums under his own "Sonambulist Recording" label. Most of his recorded tracks became parts of best selling worldwide compilations such as "Nitelife" and Pacha Ibiza's albums.

In 2003, Jools was based in Hong Kong's C Club for several months following the paths of John Da Silva and Ricky Stone. The last two years have seen Katakana extensively touring Asia and Australia.

He was the toast of top clubs such as Shanhai's Park 97 and Oz's legendary C-Moog. DJ Katakana and Ricky are now regarded as two of the biggest attractions in China and Hong Kong.

DJ Katakana

SHOW TIME

OGIE Alcasid

Tonight

Troy and KC Montero go back-to-back in Rappin' and Rockin' at **Ratsky Morato**, 9 p.m.

Oona at **Dusit Hotel Nikko**, Wednesdays

Side A at **the Tavern on the Square** in Greenbelt 2 Makati.

K24/7 at **Suburbia** in Malate.

Toy Symphony at **19 East Music Hall**. Call 8376903.

Bernie Uy at Merk's.

Tomorrow

Sarah Geronimo, Ogie Alcasid and Kitchie Nadal with **Starstruck Avengers, Masculados** and **Dance Squad** at the **Aliwan Fiesta Opening** in front of Aliw Theater, CCP Complex.

Cadio at Edsa Shangri-La Plaza's **e's bar**, Thursdays, 8:30 p.m.

Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez in "Love You, Hate You, Love You," at Merk's.

Nyoy Volante w/ Mannos at **Suburbia** in Malate.

8 Track at **the Tavern on the Square** in Greenbelt 2 Makati.

John Y Cash and The Jukebox at **Funnside**, Timog Ave., QC.

LOU Bonnevie

April 22

Earth Day Jam street party featuring **Akafellas, Chin Chin Gutierrez, Brownman Revival, Grace Nono, KC Montero, Kitchie Nadal, Lou Bonnevie, Makiling Ensemble, Parokya ni Edgar, Pido with Take One, Pinikpikan, RJ and Friends, Sponge Cola, Sugarfree** and **True Faith** at Tomas Morato Ave., QC.

Real Groove at **Shangri-La Plaza Streetscape**

K24/7 back-to-back with Passage at **Dusit Hotel Nikko**, Fridays

MTV Supahstar winners **Crizel Bañez, Kok Crisostomo, Krizia Daya, Ken Dingle, Buboy Kimpo, Rein Layug** and **Sitti Navarro** at the **SM Megamall Megastrip**.

Bedazzled II at **Club Mwah!** Call 5357943.

Rockin' Revival at **Funnside**, Timog Ave., QC.

Wally Gonzales and Friends, Sugarfree, True Faith, Pido with Take One and **Kearney Street** in back-to-back performances at **19 East Music Hall**. Call 8376903.

Panacea at **Taste Buds Robinsons Place** Manila, 7 p.m.

Fat Session at **Tavern on the Square.**

Mocha with Spinart at **Hard Rock Cafe.**

Acoustic Jive at Merk's

April 23

JA Rule at **Araneta Coliseum**, 9 p.m. Call 9115555

Boyz II Men at the **PhilSports Arena (Ultra)**, with **Kyla** as guest. Call Ticketworld, 8919999

Kearney Street at **Dusit Hotel Nikko**, Saturdays

Music Making Co. at **Shangri-La Plaza Streetscape**

Bedazzled II at **Club Mwah!** Call 5357943.

April 24

Earth Day Jazz Festival with **Sandra Lim Viray, Richard Merk, Romy Posadas, Mon David** with Triology, **Arthur Manuntag, Isha, Lynn Sherman, Nyko Maca** with Viagem, **Cooky Chua** and **Oranyan** at **Plaza Strip of Rockwell Powerplant Mall**, 4 p.m. Call 8902007

"StarStruck Superstar" at **Enchanted Kingdom**, 7 p.m.

Joross Gamboa at **Metropolis Star Alabang**, 5 p.m.

Rachelle Ann Go at **Robinsons Metro East.**

Highway 69 at **Hard Rock Cafe.**

Wiseguys at **the Tavern on the Square** in Greenbelt 2 Makati.

April 25

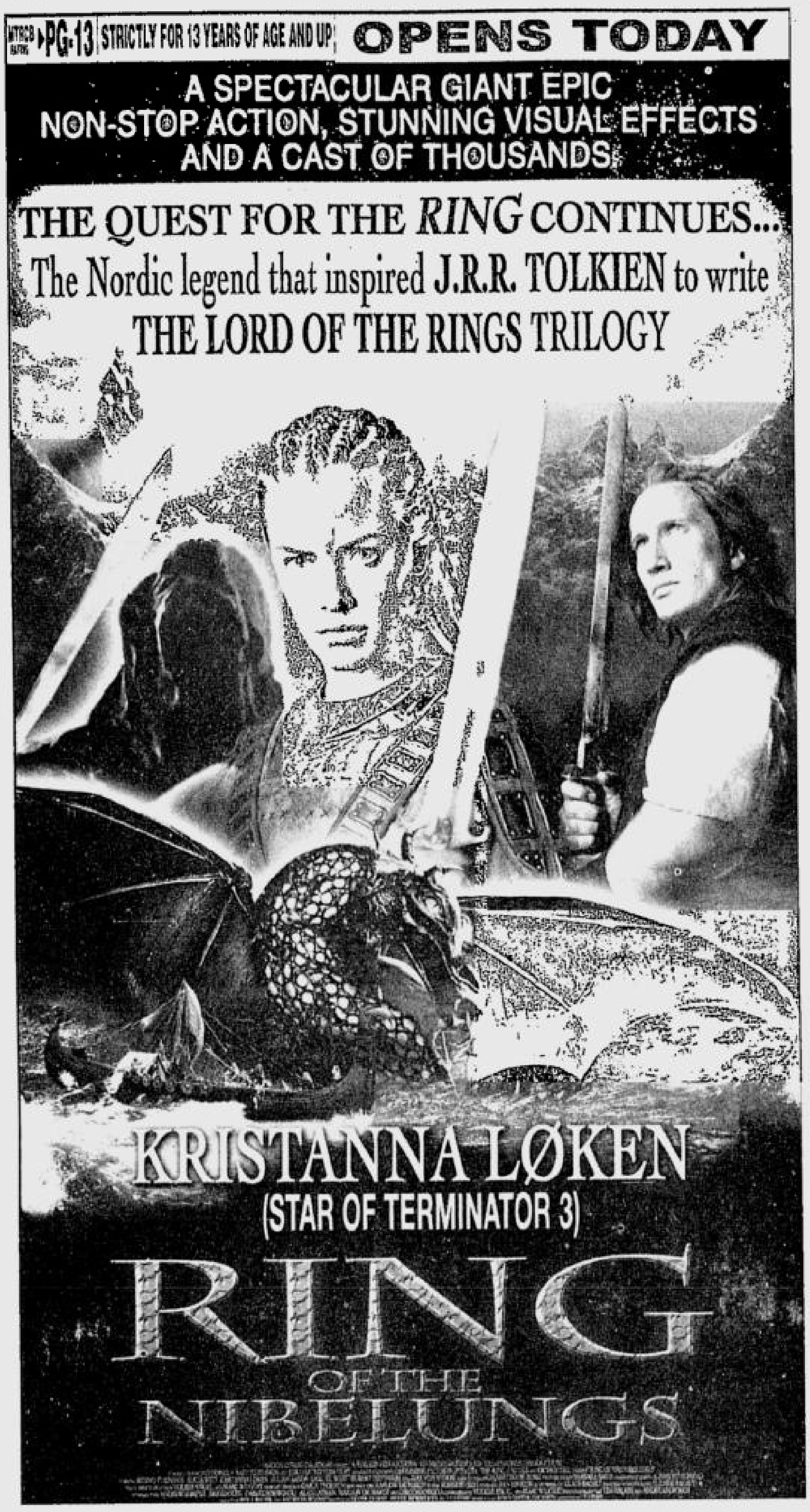
Route 70 at **Dusit Hotel Nikko**

"Retro Storm" with **Saniata** and **Ministix** bands at **Arkdia Bar** in Malate.

Freestyle at **Tavern on the Square** in Greenbelt 2 Makati.

Keystone Band at **Suburbia** in Malate.

Judith Banal with **Evolution** at **19 East Music Hall**. Call 8376903.



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KRISTANNA LØKEN
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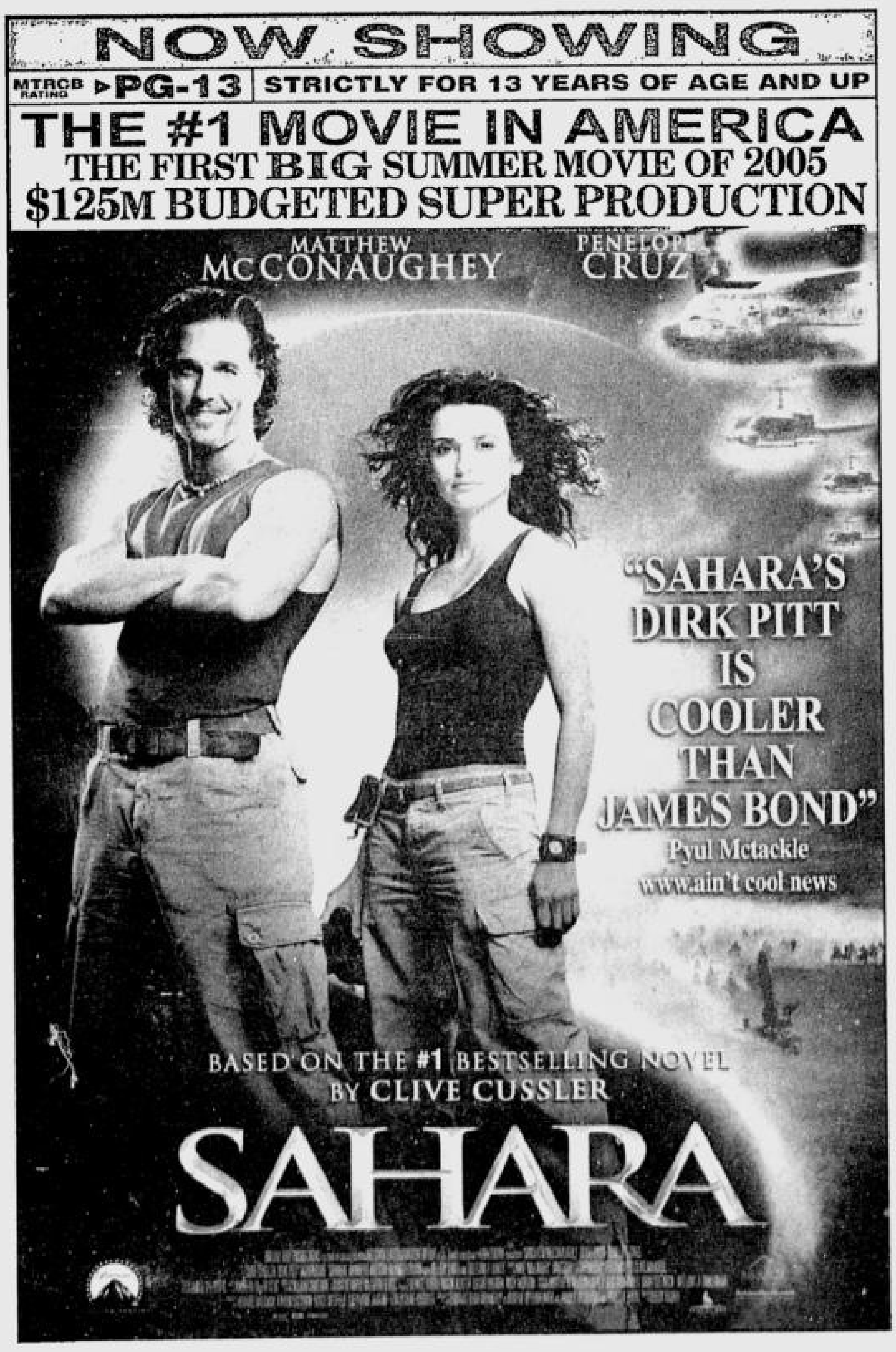
RING OF THE NIBELUNGS



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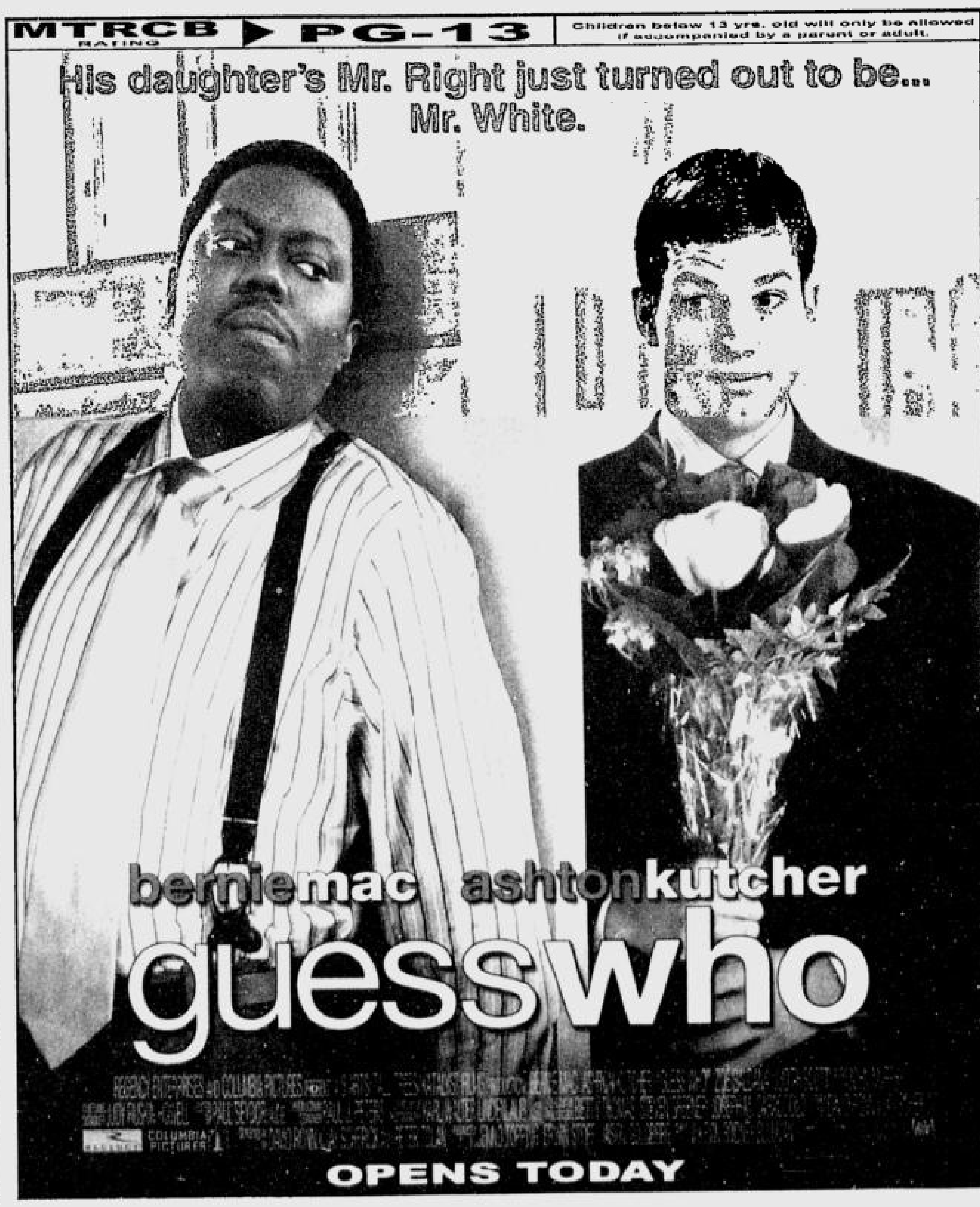

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OPENS TODAY

Unexpected Pinoy appearances on cable TV

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THIS PAST week, we've been tickled pink to witness a number of cable TV shows where Filipinos or Fil-Ams were featured. Just thought you'd like to know about them:

On the comedy show, 'Jay Kennedy Xperiments 2," a bogus court hearing was staged with actors pretending to be litigants in a far-out case involving petty larceny, homosexual jealousy and ersatz violence.

The big *palabas* was whipped up for the "benefit" of a clueless judge—who turned out to be Fil-Am. Even before she was identified, her features and distinctive accent pretty much gave her away.

It appears that the Pinay lady judge was a regular on a small community channel's "TV Court" kind of show, so she thought that the spurious case was for real. When she found out that she had been "x-ed" by the show, she burst into a delicious giggling fit that made her even more endearing.

'Balut' factor

UNEXPECTED Pinoy appearance No. 2: On the popular challenge show, "Survivor," a recent test of will, gumption and intestinal fortitude required the contestants in the wilds to eat *balut*.

Yes, the Filipino delicacy has unfortunately acquired more negative connotations on international TV, and the challenge of eating the little duck chick inside was built up by the show as a really yucky prospect.

Balut aficionados protest: Unfair! (And uninformed!)

In any case, the contestants on "Survivor" were properly intimidated, and visibly turned blue at the gills as they tried to chew and swallow the allegedly icky stuff. Homegrown Pinoys know better, of course.

Queer apparition

OUR final Pinoy apparition on US TV is also the longest: A recent hour-long episode of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" had the show's resident team of gay *caballeros* making over a Fil-Canadian gent who was newly married to a lovely Fil-Am girl.

There was unusual drama in their particular story: They had to get married fast, so only a few members of their families were on hand for the rushed ceremony. Now, they were throwing a belated reception for many people and the Fil-Canadian guy needed the show's help to pull it off and make it a big smashing success.

Well, that's what the show proceeded to do. In the process, the five hosts visibly became smitten with the newlyweds, and kept extolling their looks, manners and love for each other.

And, when their parents and siblings appeared, the hosts were even more impressed with their family ties, and their expressiveness when they spoke during the reception.

At the end of the episode, the "Queer Eye" hosts were teary-eyed as they basked in the Pinoy couple's love for each other. All in all, the entire show was a one-hour tribute to Pinoy love, determination and close family ties.

Feedback

FROM **Austin** of Tarlac City: "I really enjoy your insights and comments on just about everything. I also notice that you like to showcase contestants of reality-based talent searches with Filipino roots. Well, I'm a really big fan of World Wrestling Entertainment, and I was recently shocked to find out that the newest 'it' wrestler today is half-Greek—and half Filipino!

"He's **David Bautista**, more popularly known as Batista. It's easy to spot him, because he probably has the leanest muscles I've ever seen in wrestling! And he has the charisma, to boot. Check him out! If we can root for aspiring pop stars with Filipino blood, then we certainly have a champion and fan-favorite in Batista."

'Lady in the Water'

WARNER Bros. will produce and distribute **M. Night Shyamalan's** next film, "Lady in the Water." The film will be shot in Philadelphia, where Shyamalan has made all of his movies.

It follows the superintendent of an apartment building who finds a rare type of sea nymph swimming in the apartment pool. The production combines modern fantasy with the filmmaker's well-known brand of artistry and suspense.

Shyamalan was nominated for Oscars for Best Director and Best Original Screenplay for his worldwide hit, "The Sixth Sense." He followed up with "Unbreakable," "Signs" and "The Village." His other writing and directing credits include "Praying with Anger," "Wide Awake," and the screenplay for "Stuart Little."

Comedy tour

AI AI de las Alas starts her US comedy concert tour on April 30 at Chicago's Arie Crown Theater. On May 1, she performs at Nob Hill Masonic Center in San Francisco; on May 8, at Cox Pavilio, Las Vegas; May 13, at Dole Cannery, Oahu, Honolulu; on May 14, at HP Baldwin Auditorium, Maui, Hawaii. **Randy Santiago** and **Vhong Navarro** will also perform.

Angel dated Dennis

From page A30

is really me. We do it live, we do it in the streets using a big crane. In the beginning, I was really scared. But I got used to it."

Alessandra de Rossi, who plays Valentina in the series, said she, too, used to be scared… of snakes. "They're slimy and they smell different," said Alex. "During tapings, I used to scream a lot when I felt them moving. But I learned to overcome my fear; otherwise I wouldn't be an effective Valentina."

Alex added: "What Valentina wants, she gets. My Valentina character and I are similar in that aspect. If you promise me something, you have to deliver on time. Our difference is, I nag, while Valentina kills."

She said her character in the series is obsessed with stealing Efren from Narda. "I'm envious of her," Alex said of Narda. "I do everything to win Efren over, but nothing happens. And this makes me really furious."

As far as she's concerned, it's more exciting to play the lead role. "If you're a *kontrabida*, all you do is act mean. You hardly get to show fear, pain or happiness," she said. "It's easy to be mean. During the first shooting days, I had a hard time. My directors said I wasn't being *kontrabida* enough. I also got calls from friends who said I was not *mataray* enough." *Marinel R. Cruz*

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

GMA 7 braced to conquer Cebu

By Marinel R. Cruz

CEBU CITY—"We may be No. 2 in the Visayas today, but by the end of this year, we will be on top. This is our 'Extra Challenge,'" declared GMA 7 regional television head Jimmy Alanis, whose team is tasked with unseating leading network ABS-CBN in the Visayas region.

"Our [projected] success in Cebu will be replicated by other key cities, one by one," Alanis told INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview at the Crown Regency Suites in Lapu-Lapu City. "After Cebu comes Davao, then Dagupan and Baguio. We are also looking into the capability of our teams in La Union, General Santos, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga. In two years time, we shall be heading for the Bicol Region."

To achieve this goal, "Darna" program manager Reggie Acuña-Magno said the network was currently "strengthening" its regional stations.

"Our signal in the provinces is poor, compared to the rival network's," explained Magno. "This is one of the reasons that [ABS-CBN] is ahead."

Magno said the Kapuso network also intended to improve the content of shows produced in Cebu. She added that flying in network stars from Manila would arouse Cebuano viewers' interest.

"We try to go around. There are some shows that go to Davao or Bohol," Magno pointed out. "We also do special shows and mall tours in other provinces."

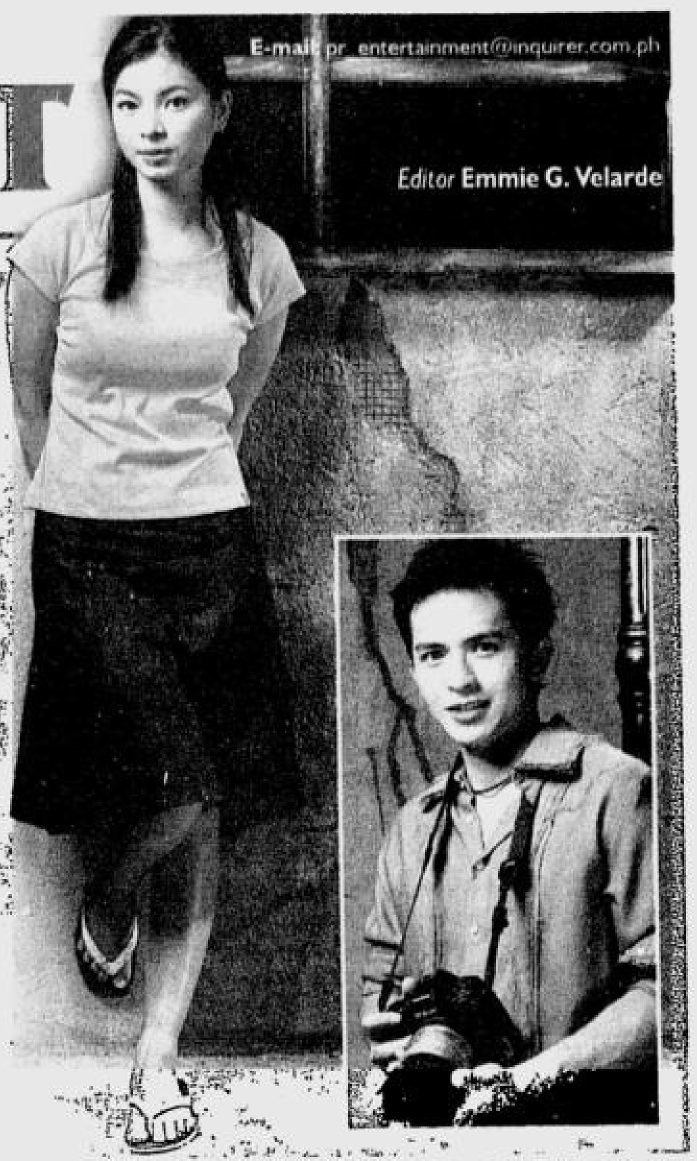
GMA 7 brought "Darna" cast members Angel Locsin, Dennis Trillo, Alessandra de Rossi, Wendell Ramos and Jeremy Marquez to Cebu. The stars got to spend time with their fans at SM City Cebu.

First time

This was the first time that GMA 7 flew in actors starring in a soap the same week that the show was launched, according to Magno. And if the large crowd that trooped to the mall were any indication, the promotion was a huge success.

On May 1, the network will host its first Grand Kapuso Fan's Day in Cebu. "Every one will be here, from the host of 'Unang Hirit' to the anchorpersons of 'Saksi,'" she announced. "This will be our first full-blast promotion here."

For Alanis, turning GMA 7 into Cebu's leading network is attainable for sure. He recalled: "I worked in Indonesia for several years. Language barrier was my biggest problem. But in the span of five years, the networks that I worked with became No. 1, 2 and 3. Here, we speak only one language. Therefore, this goal is achievable. Everything is purely attitudinal."



IT DIDN'T work out for Angel (shown here as Narda) and Dennis; they're not saying why.

Angel dated Dennis

ANGEL LOCSIN, star of the top-rating fantaserye "Darna," admitted she and co-star Dennis Trillo "dated exclusively" while taping the now-defunct hit series "Mulawin."

"This was before my love team with Richard (Gutierrez)," Angel told a group of entertainment writers during the "Darna" launch in Cebu City last week. "We really used to go out. Special *kami sa isa't-isa*, we both know that. But why it didn't work out, *kami na lang ang nakakaalam*."

"We became very busy with our work," was Dennis' explanation. "We both know that we have to focus on our careers. We're both getting good breaks now."

Dennis, who plays Efren in "Darna," has won numerous awards for his work in BasFilm's "Aishite Imasu 1941."

Unplanned

"We were just in the phase of getting to know each other then. It was just starting. We're very good friends now," Dennis said. "Falling in love and courtship, these are things that you don't plan; they just happen."

Angel confessed that their work was affected when she and Dennis decided to stop dating. "During the first shooting days of 'Darna,' *nagka-ilangan kami* (we were uneasy)," she added. "But we're okay now. We decided to just laugh everything off. I guess it helped that we now spend a lot of time at work."

To prepare for the role of Darna, Angel said she had to take up karate, wushu and practical street fighting. She also had to learn how to move with a harness. She explained: "I already learned a few points about harnessing in 'Mulawin.' But remember, one of Darna's powers is flight, and she fights while flying. What you see

ANGEL/ A29

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ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ THE INTERPRETER
❷ WEDDING DATE
❸ GUESS WHO
❹ OK KA, PARE KO
❺ PARAISO

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Artists move vs 'unethical' talk shows

Plans afoot to enlist advertisers' support in disciplining erring TV networks

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

IT'S the artists' turn to speak out.

Two months after the Professional Artist Managers, Inc. (Pami) initiated a campaign against "the unethical treatment of artists" on TV talk shows, the artists themselves are working to boost the crusade.

Award-winning scriptwriter and director Jose Javier Reyes told INQUIRER Entertainment that he had issued a position letter and met with concerned entertainment workers over the weekend to discuss the worsening situation, the indiscriminate airing of sex-video "exposés."

"This phenomenon is not unique to our country," Reyes noted. "In Hollywood, Paris Hilton and Pamela Anderson also figured in sex-video scandals.

But here, it has become a virtual cottage industry ... [or at least] a trend, like massacre movies in the mid-'90s."

This could seal the fate of the ail-

ARTISTS/A2-2

WHAT'S

■ Exclusive interview with Adrien Brody /A2-4

■ Top 10 movies in US this week /A2-4

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JOEY REYES: "We're all part of the machinery."

Artists move . . .

From page A2-1

ing movie industry, he said. "These scandals destroy lives. Because of them, the public now looks down on media personalities and practitioners. It could be one of the many reasons that local movies are failing miserably at the tills. This has got to end!"

He clarified that not one show, station, or person could be blamed for the crisis.

"We are all part of the machinery," he said. "It is up to the more responsible members of the industry to put a stop to all this."

Signature drive

Reyes and award-winning actress Cherrie Pie Picache, who first thought up a signature campaign among actors, have joined forces with Pami members.

"I've already signed Direk Joey Reyes' position letter; I am supporting him in this fight," Picache also told INQUIRER. "Aside from actors, directors and other entertainment workers have signed the letter."

Reyes said they gathered over 50 signatures in 24 hours. "We got support from a cross-section of the industry—from actor Christopher de Leon to broadcast journalist Ces Drilon, from TV director Wenn Deramas to stage and TV director Khryss Adalia. We got artists and workers from both ABS-CBN and GMA 7."

After collecting the signatures, Reyes is scheduled to present the letter to top advertisers this week.

It is a problem that cannot be solved within the industry, Reyes believes. "We have to turn to the business community."

The letter reads, in part: "Continued support of shows that capitalize on malicious scandals ... indicates not only tolerance but encouragement of this dismal perfidy of the Filipino's integrity and media's denial of social responsibility."

Pami itself is reportedly elevating the matter to the Advertising Board.

Reyes reiterated: "It all boils down to the ratings war. But ratings are useless numbers without advertising revenues."

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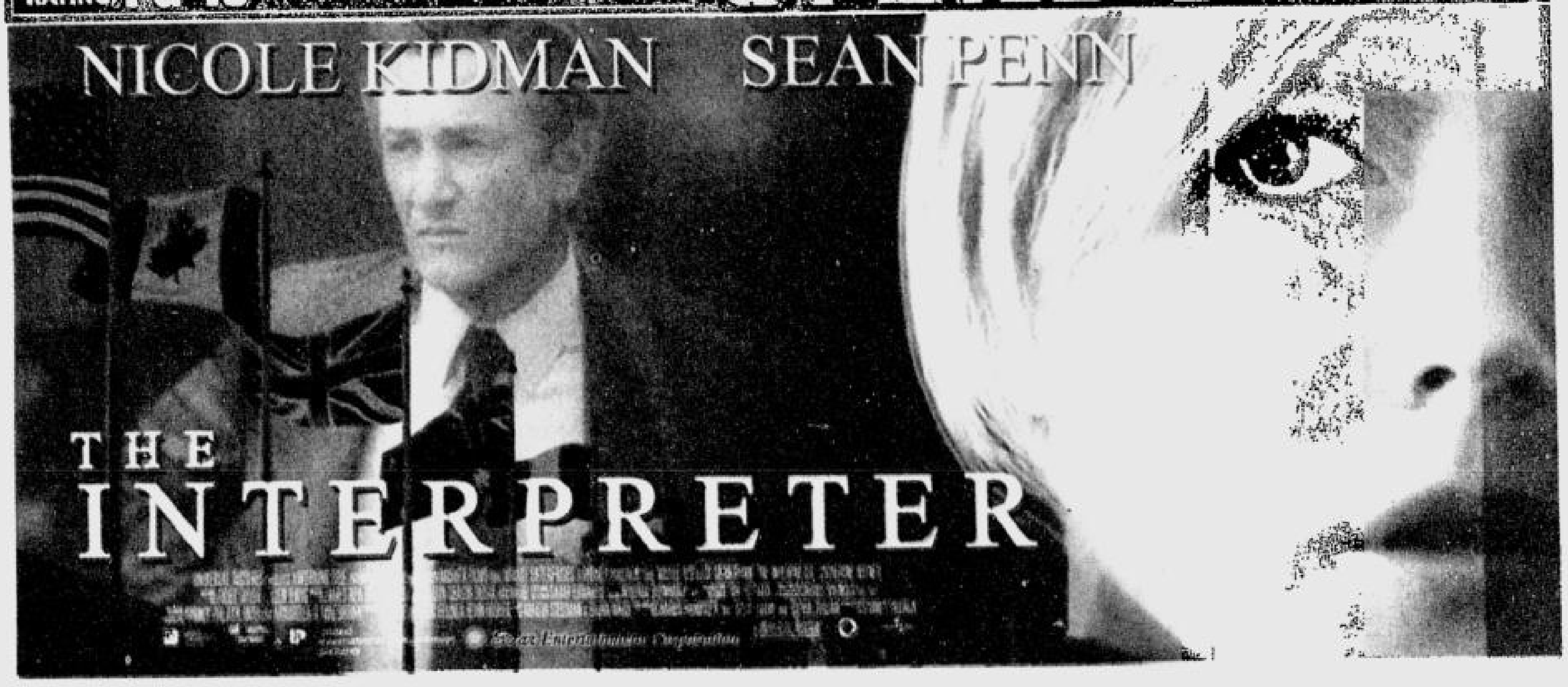
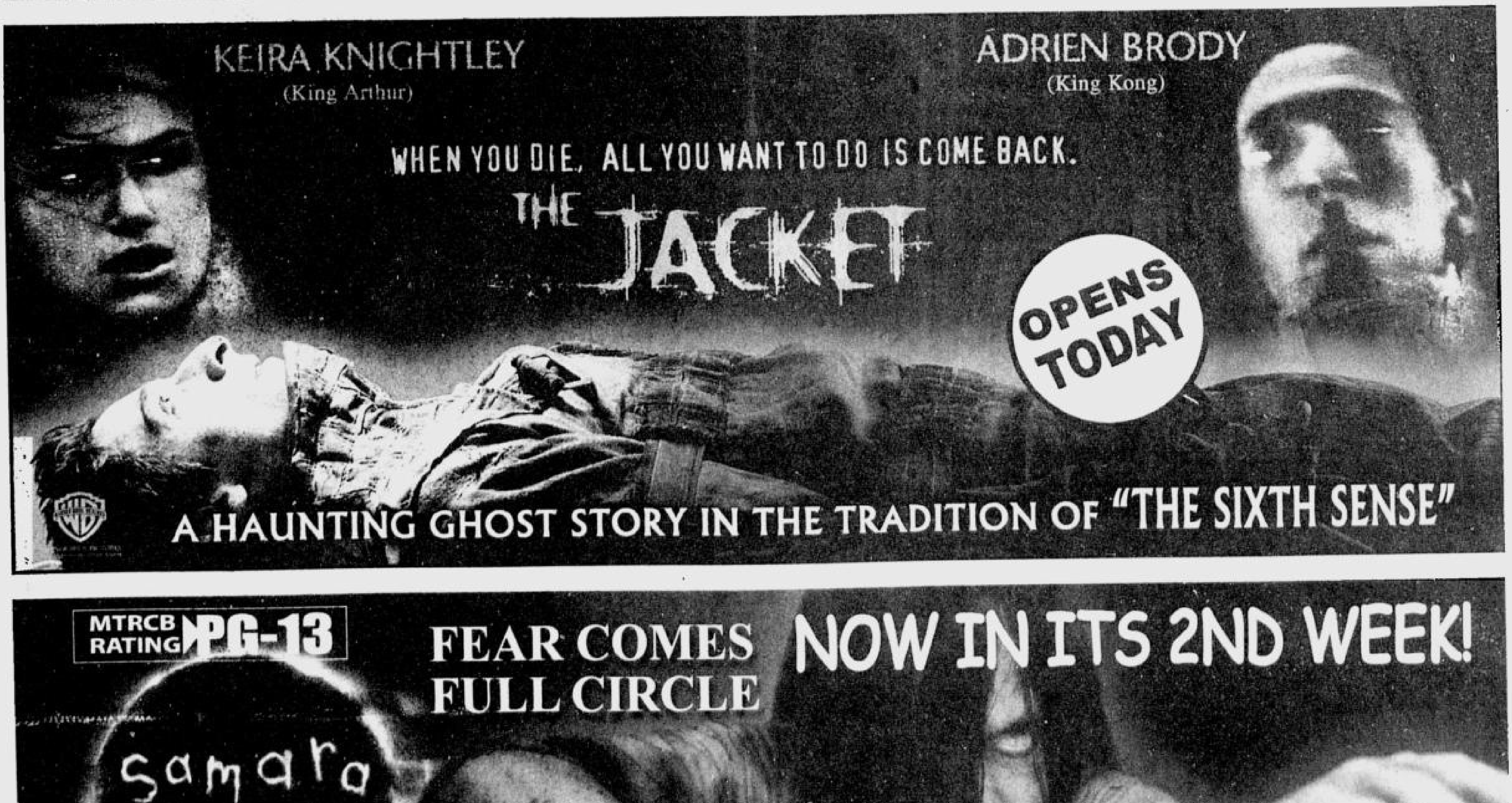


NICOLE KIDMAN
SEAN PENN
THE INTERPRETER
Solar Entertainment Corporation



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6 THE WEDDING DATE
7 PARAISO
8 BOSO
9 SAMARA RING 2
10 THE PACIFIER

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6 THE JACKET
7 GUESS WHO?
8 THE INTERPRETER

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE JACKET	2 THE WEDDING DATE	3 THX THE INTERPRETER GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SAHARA	5 RING OF NIBELUNGS	6 GUESS WHO	7 SAMARA (RING 2)
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE INTERPRETER	2 GUESS WHO					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE INTERPRETER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX GUESS WHO GUARANTEED SEATS	3 FINDING NEVERLAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE WEDDING DATE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE JACKET GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX GUESS WHO	2 THE INTERPRETER	3 THE JACKET	4 RING OF NIBELUNGS	5 THE WEDDING DATE		
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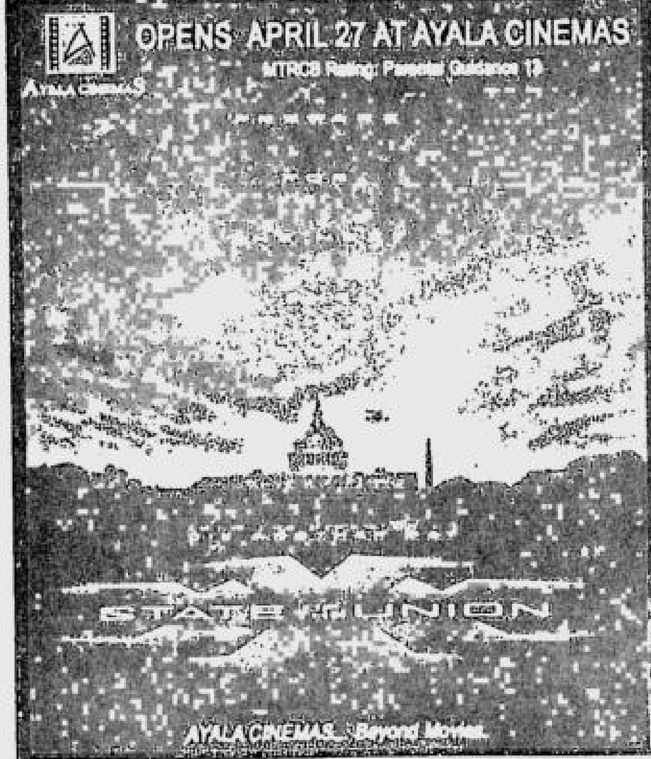

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6. The Interpreter
7. Guess Who

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The Interpreter

Directed by Sydney Pollack
Stars Nicole Kidman, Sean Penn, Catherine Keener, Max Minghella

SUMMARY: UN interpreter Silvia Broome overhears a death threat against an African head of state scheduled to address the United Nation's General Assembly. She becomes a target of the assassins as well, and turns to federal agent Tobin Keller for help. Unfortunately, he sees things differently and suspects she may not be telling the whole truth.

Peter Bradshaw, in his April 15 review in The Guardian, wrote: "The first film to be shot inside the UN building ... Nicole Kidman play(s) a UN interpreter, speaking in the imaginary African tribal language of 'Ku,' made up especially for this film. Nicole speaks Ku like a native. She has completely got the hang of Ku. Nicole swims like a dolphin in the deep grammar of Ku. And her pronunciation is frankly top drawer... For most of the time, however, this convoluted New York thriller from veteran director Sydney Pollack is in English. Or at least I think so. The way Kidman and her co-star Sean Penn are speaking the dialogue—Nicole in a sort of Afrikaaner Lite—makes me think that the original script was in fact written entirely in Ku, and rendered into English using a Google translation program."

Guess Who

Directed by Kevin Rodney Sullivan
Stars Bernie Mac, Ashton Kutcher, Zoe Saldana, Judith Scott

SUMMARY: Percy Jones is taking no chances with his daughter's future. Even before he meets Simon Green, her latest boyfriend, Percy has him checked out. On paper, he passes with flying colors. But there's one thing the credit report didn't tell him: Simon is white. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Unless, of course, Simon wants to marry his daughter.

Wesley Morris, in his March 25 review for the Boston Globe, wrote: "'Guess Who' might be an update of Stanley Kramer's well-intentioned 1967 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.' In that film, white Katharine Houghton brings black Sidney Poitier home to her white parents (Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn). Tears are shed and lessons are imparted; sap and righteousness rule. Nothing in the new movie's press notes mentions the old one. The races are reversed, and the sermons have been replaced with slapstick. This puts "Guess Who" in closer company with "Meet the Parents," as the clumsy, gangly, and inappropriate Kutcher does his shtick and the proud and unflappable Mac does his."

The Jacket

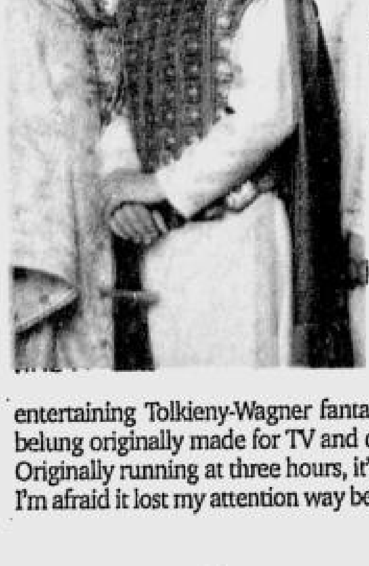
Directed by John Maybury
Stars Adrien Brody, Keira Knightley, Kris Kristofferson, Jennifer Jason Leigh

SUMMARY: A military veteran returns to his native Vermont suffering from bouts of amnesia. When he is accused of murder and lands in an asylum, a well-meaning doctor puts him on a heavy course of experimental drugs, restrains him in a jacket-like device, and locks him away in a body drawer of the basement morgue. The process sends him on a journey into the future, where he can foresee his death (but not who does it or how) in four days' time. Now the only question that matters is: Can the woman he meets in the future save him?

Roger Ebert in his March 4 review for the Chicago Sun-Star, wrote: "I was reminded of 'Jacob's Ladder' (1990), also about a traumatized vet who descends into the abyss between the real and the imagined. I admired it at the time, but have been meaning to view it again after the Rev. Andrew Greeley told me he thinks it's one of the most spiritual films of our time. 'The Jacket' will probably not make Andy's list. It has some touching moments between Jack and Jackie, whose curious willingness to trust him is explained in reasonable terms. But Dr. Becker's . . . torturous 'treatments' of Jack are so bizarre that the gentler and more philosophical possibilities in the story go astray."

Ring of the Nibelungs

Directed by Uli Edel
Stars Benno Fürmann, Kristanna Løken, Alicia Witt, Max von Sydow



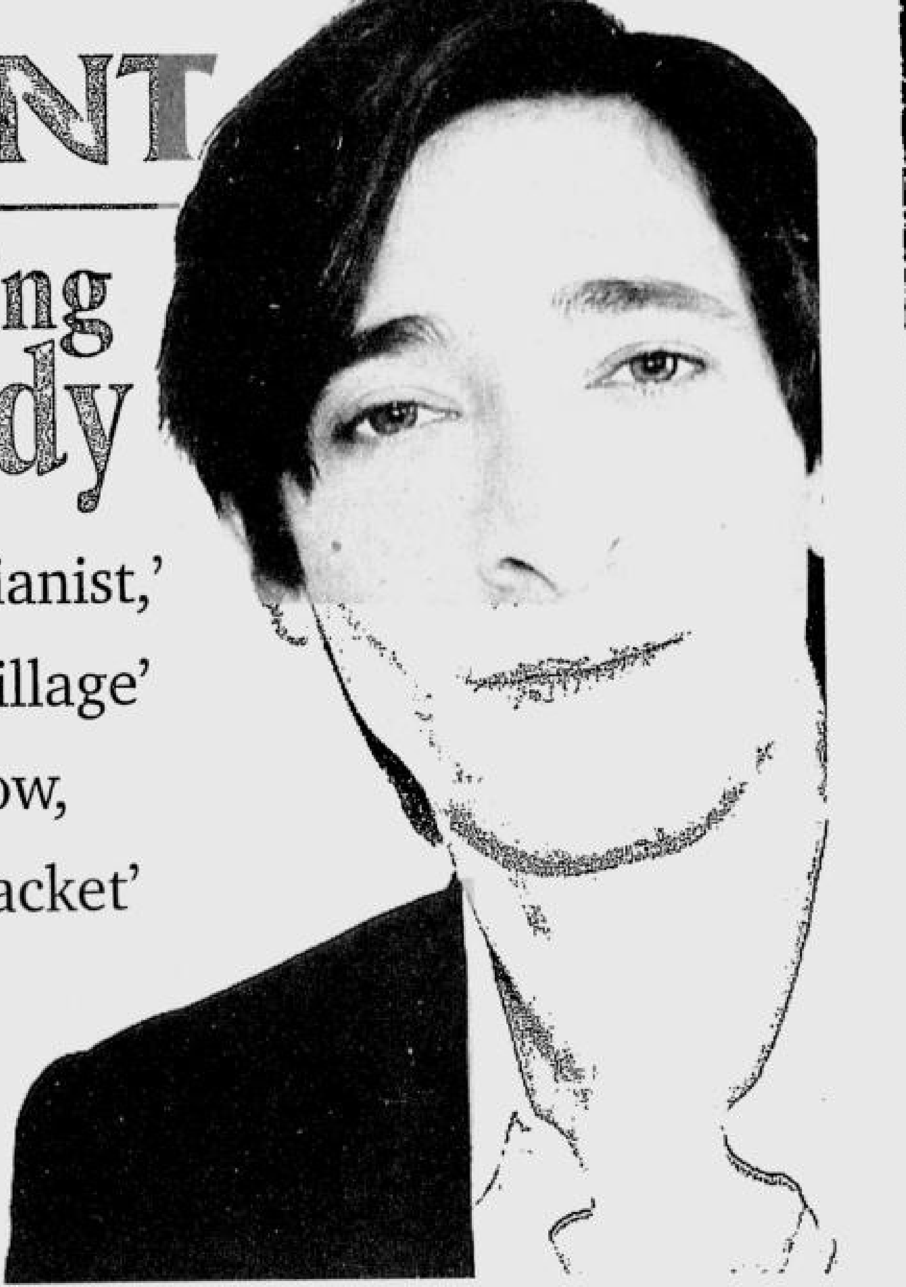
SUMMARY: Based on the Germanic myth "Das Nibelungenlied" and the Nordic "Volsunga Saga" which also inspired the four-opera cycle by Richard Wagner and J.R.R. Tolkien's epic "The Lord of the Rings," this is the story of a young blacksmith named Siegfried who, not knowing that he is heir to a conquered kingdom, becomes popular with the Burgunds by slaying their bane, the dragon Fafnir. The reward seems to be a huge treasure, and Siegfried ignores the curse that lies on the hoard—which now seems to endanger his love to beautiful Norse warrior queen Brunhild.

Peter Bradshaw, in his Nov. 19, 2004 review for The Guardian, wrote: "A silly but intermittently entertaining Tolkieny-Wagner fantasy romp about the Ring of the Nibelung originally made for TV and destined for a quick video release. . . Originally running at three hours, it's been slimmed to just over two, but I'm afraid it lost my attention way before the end."

No straitjacketing Adrien Brody

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

'The Pianist,' 'The Village' and now, 'The Jacket'



THIS Oscar winner goes after complex characters.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—It's 2 o'clock in the afternoon and Adrien Brody looks like he just came from a GQ pictorial.

Nattily dressed in a handsome pinstriped black suit and a white shirt, this Oscar awardee has always impressed us with his classy taste in clothes. The lanky, 6'1 1/2" tall New Yorker with the angular features and dark hair exudes an air of confidence as he walks into the hotel room.

At 22, Brody acts and speaks with a maturity that belies his age.

He sits down beside us, a glass of soda in hand, and greets us with a smile. The wide-band, stylish watch on his left hand distracts us for a second. (This is the current trend, especially among motorcycle aficionados, we found out from Fil-Am actor Ramon De Ocampo.)

Visions

Brody is talking to reporters about his latest movie, a drama-suspense-thriller titled "The Jacket." In this John Maybury film, Brody portrays Jack Starks, a war veteran who returns to his native Vermont suffering from bouts of amnesia. After being accused of murder, he lands in an asylum where he is put in a straitjacket and locked away in a body drawer. This procedure by the asylum, however, allows him to have visions of the future, including his own death.

Asked if being encased in a morgue body drawer during the filming triggered bouts of claustrophobia, Brody replies, "I really don't have issues with claustrophobia because I am used to small spaces from living in small apartments in New York and LA."

There were days, he reveals, where he would request to be left a little longer in the full body restraint, inside the dark morgue drawer "just to experience how my character was really feeling in a situation like that."

He confides: "I also had sessions in the isolation tank, where I had visions and hallucinations as well, just like Jack Starks. I stayed so focused on my character that instead of going to the gym to exercise, I did pushups, situps and other prison exercises. I also went on a protein diet for my role. The scene, though, where I was crying out of frustration was real. That was not scripted. John just had the camera going and really wanted me to lose it. And I did."

He narrates that "even if the paparazzi were waiting at my home in Glasgow while we were shooting there, I felt like I was in a mental institution all day. We filmed in a real institution all the time. It was a mental institution that had existed since World War I, so there's a lot of vibes in the place. I think all of it contributed to the thriller ambiance."

With such dark and complex stories in his filmography like "The Pianist," "The Village" and now "The Jacket," Brody explains, "I choose roles that I can live with for the next years, roles that I will learn from and learn about myself. Life is complex. And complex characters challenge me."

Then he insists, "But I am also drawn to humor, the lighter side of things. So as you can see, I am interested in a very broad range of things."

Has an Academy award changed his life? "No, it didn't," he casually answers. "I am still the same Adrien. I am just following the same path that interests me. It is a tremendous honor to be recognized for my work by my peers but the award hasn't affected me." He offers with a smile, "Well, (director) Peter Jackson (who made his next big movie, 'King Kong') has eight on his shelf."

Drag racer

He reveals: "What I miss doing now, because there are people with cameras waiting for me, is drag racing. I grew up in Woodhaven, Queens and everybody in my neighborhood was into it. The young guys fixed up muscle cars and souped them up, going to abandoned roads and racing each other. I also like motorcycles but I try not to be reckless on a motorcycle. I am a real fan of motor sports."

Finally, the actor says, laughing: "I also miss going down to a café without paparazzi following me and trying to find out if I used artificial sweeteners or not. I must be living dangerously, eating all that sugar or vice versa."

'Amityville Horror' tops 'Sahara' in US this week

LOS ANGELES—"The Amityville Horror" returned from the dead with a vengeance, with the gory update of the 1970s fright flick taking in $23.3 million to top the weekend box office.

The previous weekend's No. 1 movie, the African desert adventure "Sahara," slipped to second place with $13.1 million, lifting its 10-day total to $36.4 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"The Amityville Horror," starring Ryan Reynolds and Melissa George, is the latest in a parade of successful horror remakes. With a built-in audience looking for scares and a string of hits such as "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," "The Grudge" and "Dawn of the Dead," horror movies have become almost a sure-thing in Hollywood.

Bad reviews

Horror movies also typically cost far less than other big studio films, whose average budgets top $60 million. "Amityville" grossed more than its $19-million budget in just the first weekend.

The movie received mostly bad reviews, yet the under-25 crowd that makes up the genre's core audience rarely heeds the critics. "The only reviews that count are the public's reviews," said Erik Lomis, head of distribution for MGM, which released "Amityville."

In limited release, David Duchovny's directing debut, "House of D," opened strongly with $30,000 in two theaters. The coming-of-age tale features Duchovny, wife Tea Leoni, Robin Williams and Erykah Badu.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc:

1) "The Amityville Horror," $23.3 million
2) "Sahara," $13.1 million
3) "Fever Pitch," $8.8 million
4) "Sin City," $6.7 million
5) "Guess Who," $4.9 million
6) "Beauty Shop," $3.8 million
7) "Robots," $3.55 million
8) "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," $2.9 million
9) "The Pacifier," $2.4 million
10) "The Upside of Anger," $1.9 million

AP

THE "bad" house

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROPEOFSILICON.COM

Why moviegoers picked this one

REVIEW

LOS ANGELES—"Kind of freaky, being back here," says a babysitter returning to the haunted house in "The Amityville Horror" to mind the kids of the new couple living there. She babysat the doomed children of the previous owners.

We know the feeling, only we'd use an adjective stronger than freaky.

Why we're being dragged back to Amityville is clear: revisiting old horror movies pay, for Hollywood, at least. We don't have to be happy about it, though.

This remake does not quite sink to the execrable depths of last year's prequel "Exorcist: The Beginning," yet it is the worst of a recent batch of horror updates that include "Dawn of the Dead" and "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre."

Cheap cliches

Director Andrew Douglas, making his feature-film debut after a long career in photography, commercials and music videos, piles on every cheap horror cliche imaginable: Blood gushing from faucets and oozing out of walls; things that go BOOM rather than bump in the night; mystery voices yammering in the duct work. enough apparitions to make ghost extras think about starting their own Hollywood trade guild.

The acting is a fright all on its own. Ryan Reynolds is so over-the-top as the stepfather-turned-ogre by evil spirits possessing his dim little brain, he comes off as a Joan Crawford-like Daddy Dearest for the supernatural set.

"There's no bad houses, just bad people," says bad actor Reynolds' George Lutz, the handyman who decides to move into the Long Island home with his wife and her three children from a previous marriage even after they learn it was the site of a grisly mass murder a year earlier.

Melissa George is not much better as Kathy Lutz, alternating between bland housewifery and shrill screaming. The Lutz children (Jesse James, Jimmy Bennett and Chloe Grace Moretz) generally are upstaged by manifestations of a dead girl (Isabel Conner) slain in the house. She's not necessarily a better actress; the ghost just has more personality.

And as a priest who dashes in terror from the house after the evil spirits kick his butt during an exorcism, Philip Baker Hall seems motivated more by a desire to flee a rotten movie than by things from beyond.

What few potential scares the movie holds continually are undermined by unintentional laughs. When she's showing the house to the Lutzes, a real-estate woman's furtive glances are so farcical she seems to be thinking, "If only I can get them to sign the deal before the demons jump out of the woodwork..."

Douglas and screenwriter Scott Kosar make no effort to let the story build, instead going for moviegoers' jugulars from the start with a frenzy of nightmarish visions.

The barrage calls to mind skeptics' arguments that the supposedly true story of the Lutz family was a hoax.

Garish ghosts

You're seeing ghastly images almost from the get-go, including a horrid child's face right next to your little daughter's in the window. Yet you stayed in the house for 28 days because...?

Most good ghost stories, such as the original "The Haunting" and "The Others," work because of what they leave unseen. A viewer's imagination can run to scarier extremes than anything Hollywood tricksters might throw up on the screen.

Capture a spooky tone and present an interesting story, and you don't need the cheesy makeup and gory effects. The audience will do the filmmakers' work for them and freak itself out.

In some cases, such as "The Ring" or "The Grudge," filmmakers manage to craft central images of malevolent spirits that truly augment the creepiness and terror.

Not in "Amityville," though. The more garish the ghosts, the better.

The original "The Amityville Horror" from 1979 was a bad movie itself yet became a hit, so the remake certainly could do the same. Let's hope that, unlike the first movie, its unholy seed will not beget any awful sequels.

AP

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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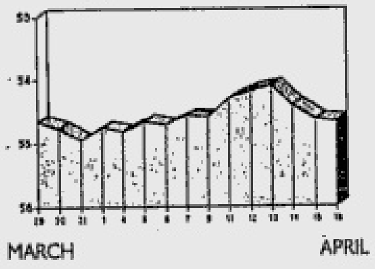
CalPERS keeps RP on list of invest sites

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



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As of 5 p.m., April 19, 2005

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per ounce Hong Kong, April 19, 2005

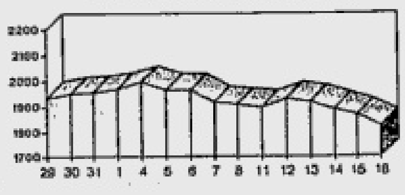
STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.84% higher

SHARE prices closed 0.84 percent higher yesterday on a modest technical rebound following heavy losses sustained in a four-day losing

SHARES/ B4

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



By Doris C. Dumlao

THE CALIFORNIA Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), the biggest pension fund in the United States, has retained the Philippines in its list of 19 "permissible" investment sites for 2005.

In a report released by CalPERS yesterday, the Philippines obtained a score of 2.0 based on the latest annual assessment of the pension fund's consultant Wilshire Associates, the minimum rating needed to be kept in its favored equity market list.

But the country's rating was slightly down from the 2.12 score in 2004, so far the best score obtained from Wilshire since 2002.

The Philippines passed five out of seven country and market factors used by Wilshire in the assessment, garnering its best rating of 3.0 in two categories—transparency and market regulation/legal protection/investor protection.

However, the country flunked two categories, getting only a 1.0 in political stability and capital market openness.

The country was rated 2.0 in the three other remaining categories—productive labor practices, market liquidity and volatility, and settlement proficiency/transaction costs.

The new countries added by CalPERS to its list of permissible emerging equity markets this year were Argentina, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkey, which reaped respective scores of 2.04, 2.0, 2.13 and 2.13.

Sri Lanka and Thailand were included in the list this year after meeting CalPERS' standards, as the political environment in Sri Lanka improved, while Thailand expanded market capitalization in its equity markets and lowered transaction costs.

Wilshire reviewed 27 emerging markets, of which 19 made it to the favored list. CalPERS said it would not permit equity investments in Colombia, China, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Venezuela and Indonesia.

Of the excluded countries, Venezuela had the worst rating of 1.46, followed by Pakistan's and Egypt's 1.63, China's and Colombia's 1.67, Russia's and Morocco's 1.79 and Indonesia's 1.92.

"Emerging markets have continued to improve under our policy," said Rob Feckner, president of the CalPERS' Board of Administration. "We are witnessing a greater level of transparency and an increased effort by countries to reform their markets to support institutional investment."

The Philippines was almost stricken off CalPERS' radar screen in 2004 if not for intense lobbying by a local delegation that contested the ratings in some of the categories used by Wilshire.

"The retention of the Philippines in the CalPERS' list is recognition of the government's reform efforts to improve the economic environment and the investment opportunities available in the country," said Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

CalPERS' decision is also seen by the market as a reaffirmation of its confidence in the country as a viable location for its portfolio investments amounting to about $80 million.

Mike Ordinanza, an analyst at Bank of Commerce, said that given the local stock market's strong performance in 2004, there was no doubt that the Philippines deserved to be retained in CalPERS' list.

"Being on the list will help the Philippines attract more investors," he said.

Although CalPERS' exposure in Philippine equities was not that big, Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas said it would send a good signal to foreign investors.

Of the 27 emerging markets

CalPERS/ B4

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Philnico, China group to form JV

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE Nickel Corp. (Philnico) and a Chinese consortium-led Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corp. have finalized their joint venture agreement, paving the way for the start of the $1-billion rehabilitation of a mining project in Surigao.

Philnico president Evaristo Narvaez, who is now in Beijing, said the two parties have finally ironed out the kinks and the joint venture agreement would most likely be signed during the state visit to the Philippines of Chinese Prime Minister Yu Jintao on April 25 to April 27.

"It is a done deal. The Chinese consortium led by Jinchuan and Shanghai Baosteel Group Corp. will provide $500 million, equivalent to a 40-percent equity in Philnico," Narvaez told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

He said the Chinese consortium, that would also include China Development Bank, would assist Philnico in securing loans to complete the needed rehabilitation fund of $1 billion.

The project will also involve the acquisition of new technology, including the high pressure acid leach (HPAL) system.

Jinchuan is the largest mining and refinery company in China that produces nickel, copper and platinum metals, and Baosteel is one of the largest steel companies in the world.

Japan vows to continue extending ODAs to RP

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said it had secured the commitment of the Japanese government to continue providing official development assistance to the Philippines, as the Arroyo administration agreed to address the delays in the payment of loans and tax refunds to Japanese contractors.

Jonathan Uy, director III of the Neda public investment unit, said the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) had assured the Philippines they would not cut their assistance to the country despite the delays in the payment of the said loans and tax refunds.

Japanese contractors were reportedly collecting from the Philippine government a total of P1.1 billion, including their VAT claims. The loans represent the cost of the project that should have been paid by concerned government agencies with their counterpart funding.

JBIC is the country's biggest source of ODAs, while Jica is one of the major providers of grants.

He said Jica was expected to keep its average annual grant of $100 million to the Philippines this year. The Philippine government is also set to discuss the ODA- and grant-funded projects and programs with JBIC and Jica in June or July.

Bankard posts loss

BANKARD Inc. reported a loss of P574 million for 2004 from an income of P83 million in 2003.

The company said the loss was brought about mainly by the adoption of conservative accounting practices.

Bankard, in a statement, said the "accounting pain would make it gain in the coming years."

The tighter accounting practices, adopted in compliance with BSP Circular 398, reduced the company's interest income and increased its provisions for problem accounts, it said.

The company was also adversely affected by higher interest rates which increased its borrowing costs, and the re-imposition of the gross receipts tax (GRT) in 2004, replacing the value-added tax (VAT) in 2003.

This year, it added, the company was expecting to generate higher revenue by expanding its merchant base and fee-based business, reducing allowance for doubtful accounts as a result of lower delinquencies/higher portfolio quality, and lowering funding costs.

It also said that its new card product, myDream JCB, continued to do well, ending 2004 with 48,000 cards issued and P1 billion in receivables. Delinquency rates have gone down as the company screens new card holders more tightly.

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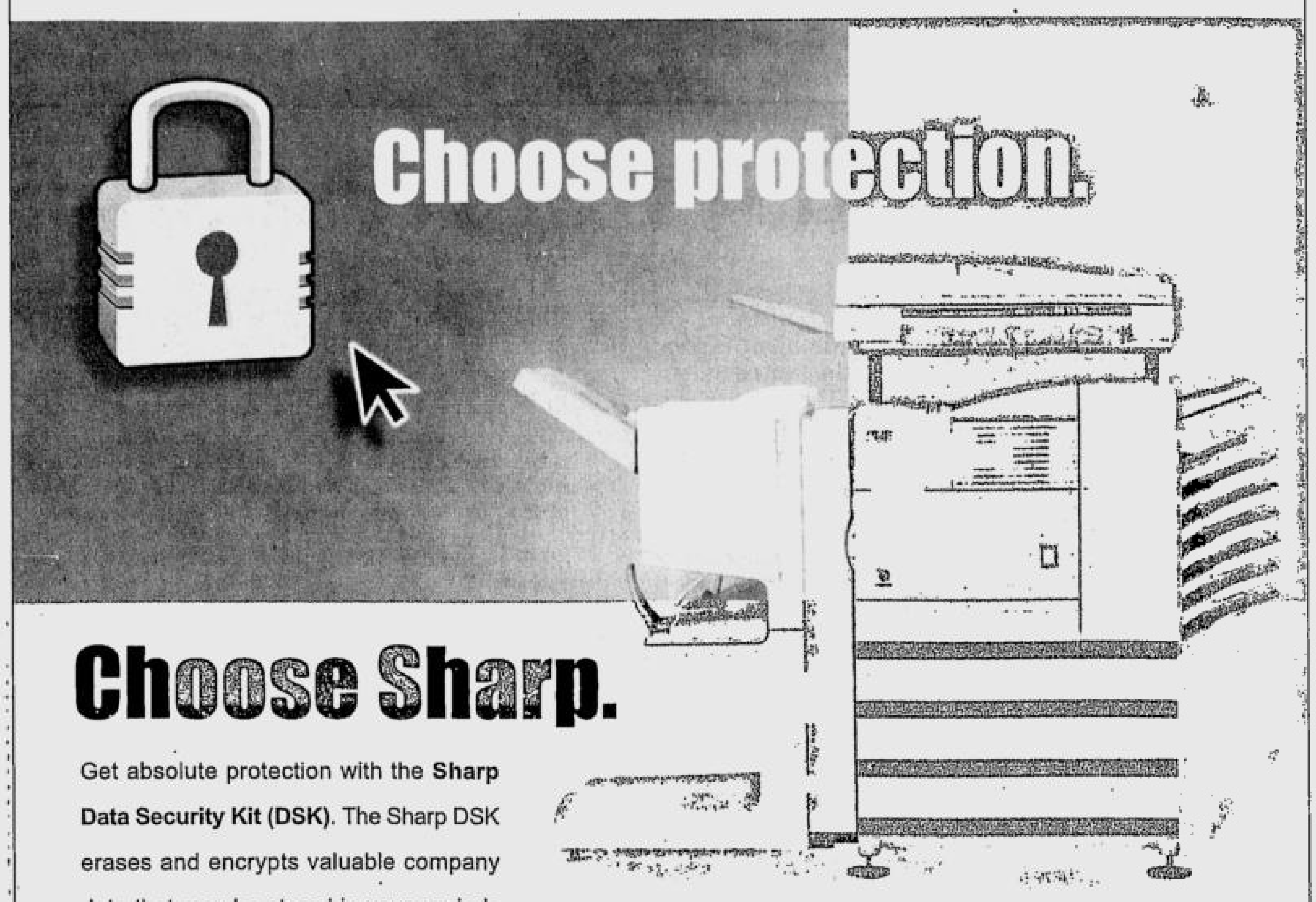

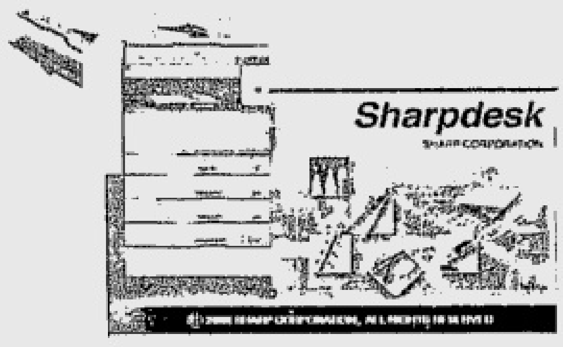

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Session Chair: Dr. Nick C. Fontanilla
President, The Asia Pacific Center for Research

Session One:
A Business Philosophy for Extreme Marketing: Pushing Your Limits in a Crisis Economy

Speaker: Bienvenido Policarpio
Executive Vice President, Prudential Group of Companies
President, Dale Carnegie Philippines

Session Two:
Customer Relationship Management: Building Technology to the Extreme

Speaker: Mr. Mark Yambot
Director for Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Philippines, Inc.

Session Three:
Pain Makes Gains: Pharmaceutical Companies Going Beyond Pain

Speaker: Mr. Carlos "Do" Ejercito
President, United Laboratories Group

Session Four:
The New Empire: Shaping the Future of High-Rise Condominiums

Speaker: Mr. Luke Tan
Director, Investor Relation, Megaworld

Session Five:
Challenging Global Brands through Sports Marketing Events

Speaker: Mr. Christophe Bezu
Senior Vice President, Adidas-Salomon AG, Hong Kong

Day 2 : May 26, 2005
Session Chair: Dr. Karen De Asis
Marketing Consultant
Marketing Director, La Salle Graduate School

Session Six:
Mega Formulas for Extreme Marketing from a Marketing Guru

Speaker: Mr. Hermawan Kartajaya
President & Leading Service Officer, MarkPlus&Co.

Session Seven:
The Telecommunications Industry Revealed: Telecommunications Convergence: Challenge to the Extreme!

Speaker: Mr. Charles Lim*
CEO, Digitel Mobile Philippines, Inc.

Session Eight:
The New Imperative in Today's Convergence in Marketing: Sustainable Growth

Speaker: Mr. Gavin Coombes
Vice President, Euro RSCG Asia Pacific

Session Nine:
Mall Mania: Shop Until You Drop!

Speaker: Ms. Grace F. Magno
Head of Marketing, Araneta Group of Companies

Session Ten:
New Rules in Market Leadership: Success Stories in Non-traditional Bank Marketing

Speaker: Mr. Tomas Victor Mendoza
SAVP, Banco de Oro Universal Bank

Session Eleven:
Creativity on the Edge: Media & Marketing Convergence

Speaker: Nicanor C. Gabunada
Senior Vice President for Integrated Sales & Marketing, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Company

Session Twelve:
Advertising Convergence: Bringing Filipino Consumers Closer to the Brand through Humor

Speaker: Mr. Joselito B. Ortega
Chairman & CEO, BrandLab, Inc.

Closing Session:
The Road to Recovery through Market Convergence

Speaker: Mr. Jose Jesus F. Roces
Professor, Asian Institute of Management (AIM)
President, Asia Pacific Marketing Federation (APMF)

** Speaker for confirmation*

PLDT goes into satellite TV

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

PLDT is going into the satellite TV business, and its most likely partner is EchoStar, the biggest direct-to-home digital television network in the United States.

According to the grapevine, EchoStar Communications chair/CEO Charles Ergen was scheduled to arrive in Manila last night to sign a memorandum of understanding on the proposed $85-million venture with Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

The new PLDT venture is apparently being undertaken independent of the Dream satellite TV business of former PLDT chair Antonio Cojuangco Jr., although Cojuangco is being invited to fold in Dream into the new, better capitalized venture.

The planned direct-to-home pay TV business will also become the infotainment and broadcast platform long dreamed of by PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan, who has been thwarted in his attempt to acquire the GMA network. According to the grapevine, PLDT is mulling over the establishment of another subsidiary that will also produce shows for the satellite TV venture.

Under the joint venture, the publicly listed EchoStar will provide not only set-up boxes and home antennas but also make available to PLDT more than 2,000 video and audio channels, and video-on-demand services, that it currently offers its 11 million American subscribers.

The foreign, as well as local, TV and radio programs will then be re-beamed to all corners of the Philippines using PLDT's Mabuhay satellite.

One added boost of the satellite venture is that PLDT's radio network, NBC, will then be heard throughout the archipelago, rather than just, because of its limited franchise, Metro Manila and parts of Central Luzon and Calabarzon.

Pacific cut

THE FLOUNDERING Pacific Plans is offering plan holders who are willing to wait for five years, or up to 2010, a 7-percent interest for their educational plans.

Yesterday, there was a small ad on Page B3 of this paper, from PS-Bank, offering a five-year "Prime Time Deposit" account at 8.5 percent earnings, guaranteed.

In other words, after all the hours spent receiving investment counseling from pushy pre-need agents, Pacific Plans shareholders would have made more money on their money by simply parking their cash in a bank or, even better, by buying the treasury bills/Philippine notes themselves.

As part of a rehabilitation plan, Pacific Plans is asking its plan holders to wait for 2010 encashment since that is when the underlying securities, National Power Corp. dollar-denominated bonds, shall mature.

What Pacific Plans has not been telling its remaining 34,000-shareholder base is that, when the debt papers were issued in July 2002, the Napocor bonds offered a whopping 11.1-percent yield.

According to the grapevine, Pacific Plans came to acquire the Napocor 2010 only later in the game, when the yield was down to 9.19 percent. Still, between 7 and 9.19 percent represents a 2.19-percentage-point spread, which presumably went and will still go to pay for salaries + bonuses, administrative/operating/marketing expenses, and, of course, sales commissions.

One final small print.

PACIFIC Plans has been left with only five—that's right, five—employees, including its new chair/president, Ernesto Garcia.

The payment and processing of the claims have all been outsourced to Lifetime Plans, the pre-need company that the Yuchengcos formed last year to isolate the rest of the business from the "cancerous" traditional pre-need line that is now ravaging the country's first pre-need company.

(SSS president Corazon dela Paz said that she has never served in any Yuchengco board, contrary to what was reported here on Monday.)

Money-go-round

- SENATOR Juan Ponce Enrile will resume tomorrow grilling the Standard Chartered Bank executives led by country representative Simon Morris. The SCB has promised to behave, and banish "in aid of collection" from their vocabulary, and never even advert to a Sigma Rho network or dancing partner in their testimony.
- MARCOS-ERA Ambassador Jonathan dela Cruz and Banco Filipino's Ramon Arcenas are "helping" in the media efforts of a group of Hacienda Looc farmers who have filed a petition with the Securities and Exchange Commission to de-list SM Investments Corp.
- HOUSE Majority Floor Leader Prospero Nograles, who placed second in the 1971 bar exams and received a TOYM award in 1985 for law and human rights, will receive today an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Mindanao, the school's first such honoree.

Nograles, a Davaweño, received his bachelor's and law degrees from the Ateneo de Manila, where, circa 1966-67, he was more popular with the Maryknoll coeds as the lead singer, along with Jose Mari Chan, of the Splash band.

Heard through the grapevine

MAGSAYSAY Lines is expanding out of its Manila-Corregidor ferry business to transport hotel guests from Caticlan to Boracay and back.

In addition, Magsaysay CEO Doris Magsaysay-Ho also plans to offer battery-operated trolleys to shuttle the tourists, in view of the local government's plan to ban the polluting and noisy two-stroke tricycles now operating on the popular island-resort.

(E-mail: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Ayala Life sees P1B in sales of new plan

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK of the Philippine Islands' insurance unit Ayala Life Assurance Inc. aims to underwrite about P1 billion worth of new plans this year under a new product catering to "yuppies."

In a press briefing yesterday, Ayala Life president Emilio de Quiros Jr. said that based on the warm market reception since the launch of "Life Achiever" early this year, the insurance unit was likely to generate P50 million in first year premiums representing about P1 billion worth of new plans for the new product.

Life Achiever, designed mostly for yuppies or young, upwardly mobile professionals, guarantees that one can be a millionaire at a certain age. One who starts the plan at age 25, for instance, can be a certified millionaire at age 40.

"This is the most versatile insurance product in the market at this point in time," De Quiros said.

The new product is an endowment plan that grants a lump sum cash benefit to the policyholder at age 40, 45, 50, 55 or 60. At the same time, the plan allows an insurance coverage equal to the lump sum benefit for the duration of the program, with the option to purchase a special accident rider that doubles the coverage if the insured dies accidentally.

The product has so far registered an average monthly sales increase of 158 percent in policy count, exclusive of advertising and promotions, with sales primarily catering to yuppies. Although targeting the young, there are also other plans accommodating the needs of middle managers in their 30s or even top executives in their 40s.

The product targets those aged at least 18 and not exceeding 50.

LRT 1 consortium seeks gov't guarantee

By Clarissa S. Batino

CANADIAN firm SNC Lavalin is asking the government to provide a sovereign guarantee for it to raise the funds needed to finance the construction of the $865-million extension of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 to Cavite from Baclaran.

Mel Robles, administrator of the Light Rail Transit Authority, said the government would have to provide some form of a guarantee to allow the private group to close a deal with creditors.

But any guarantee, he said, would have to be least disadvantageous to the government. He said the government should not be made to shoulder commercial risks similar to what the proponents of the Metro Rail Transit 3 got away with.

"There must be some form of a guarantee. Otherwise, there could be problems with the creditors. But it cannot be anything similar to MRT 3, which was given a guarantee on ridership," Robles said.

He said that by June, the transportation department would conduct a Swiss challenge for the project since the extension of the Line 1 to Cavite was an unsolicited proposal of the Canadian investor.

The extension has become one of the priority projects of the Arroyo administration. Robles pointed out, however, that the Line 1 extension to Cavite would take place only after the capacity of the Monumento-to-Baclaran line had been expanded.

The Line 1 extension would add another 12 kilometers to the existing line. The first phase of the project will extend the railway to Bacoor, Cavite, with a projected ridership of 400,000 passengers daily.

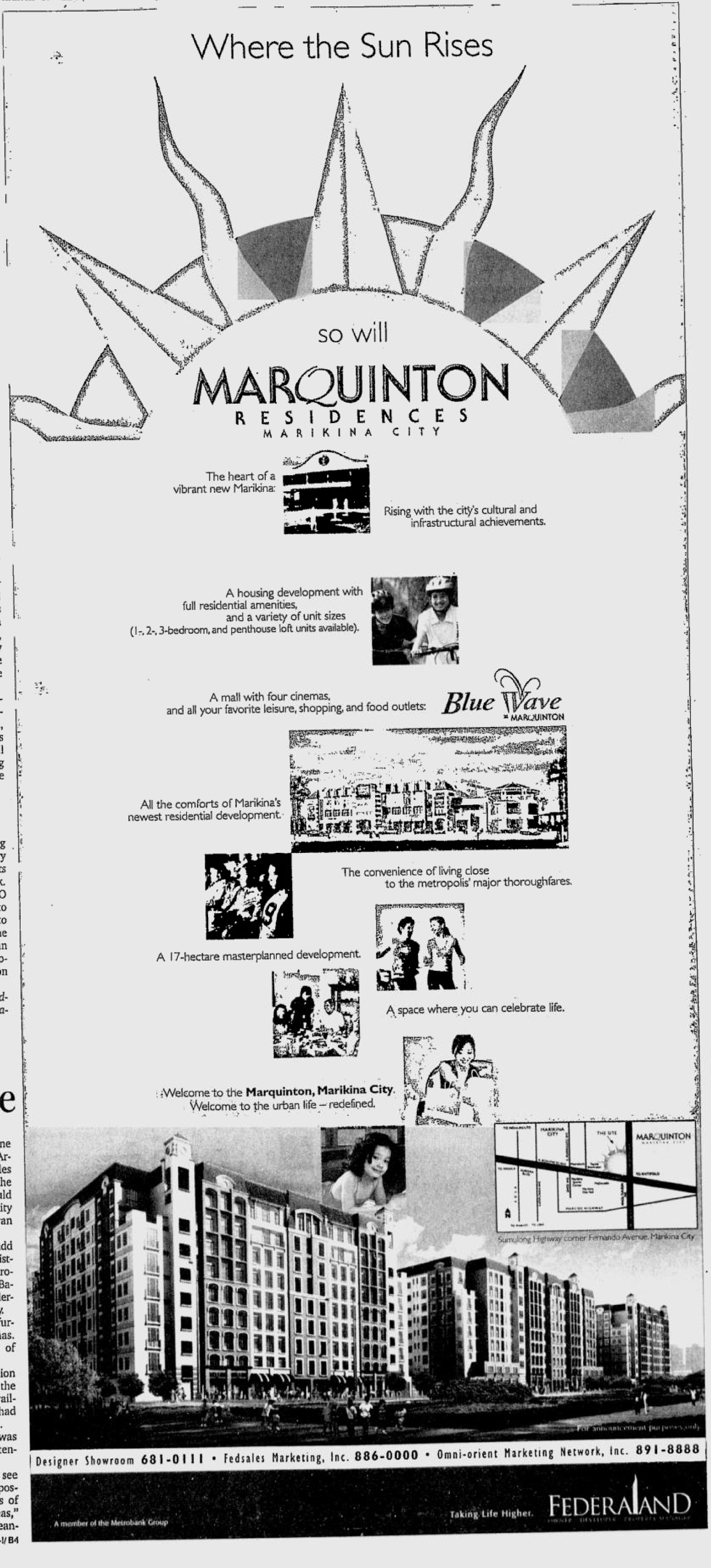
It may later be extended further to Imus and to Dasmariñas. Line 1 carries an average of 350,000 passengers a day.

Robles said the extension would make the LRT Line 1 the most viable among the mass railway projects. The project had been delayed for several years.

The LRTA, said Robles, was now looking to operate the extension by 2009.

"President Arroyo wants to see the project started as soon as possible to benefit the residents of Cavite and surrounding areas," Transportation Secretary Lean-

LRT-1/ B4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United States	Dollar	0.768108	1.000000	54.6980
Japan	Yen	0.007143	0.009299	0.5086
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462171	1.903600	104.1231
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098493	0.128228	7.0138
Switzerland	Franc	0.646610	0.841822	46.0460
Canada	Dollar	0.615965	0.801925	43.8637
Singapore	Dollar	0.464732	0.605034	33.0941
Australia	Dollar	0.587913	0.765404	41.8661
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.037476	2.652590	145.0914
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204824	0.266660	14.5858
Brunei	Dollar	0.463330	0.603209	32.9943
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000080	0.000104	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019419	0.025281	1.3828
UAE	Dirham	0.209168	0.272316	14.8951
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.301900	71.2113
Argentina	Peso	0.265048	0.345066	18.8744
Brazil	Real	0.293844	0.382555	20.9250
Denmark	Kroner	0.134170	0.174676	9.5544
India	Rupee	0.017609	0.022925	1.2540
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.202161	0.263193	14.3961
Mexico	New Peso	0.069161	0.090041	4.9251
New Zealand	Dollar	0.549434	0.715308	39.1259
Korea	Won	0.000754	0.000981	0.0537
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024254	0.031576	1.7271

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SM MEGAMALL 5th Flr. Bldg. A 635-0436
SM SOUTHMALL Basement 802-1565
SM NORTH EDSA Car Park Plaza 453-3326
SM FAIRVIEW Basement 418-7540
ROBINSONS GALLERIA Basement 635-5061
CEBU 412-4818

Shares

From page B1

streak, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 15.19 points to 1,834.06 after trading between 1,818.60 and 1,837.95. Volume was 404.06 million shares worth P1.54 billion. The broader all-shares index rose 16.20 points to 1,137.32. *AFP*

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 19, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	24,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	26	26	24.75	26	896,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	47.5	47	47.5	2,072,200
China Banking Corp.	655	660	655	660	250
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.68	1,830,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	47	46.5	47	62,700
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.25	18	18	117,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31	30.5	31	175,500
Philippine National Bank	30	30	30	30	5,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	4,600
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	157,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	28	28	78,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2455	2450	2455	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	368,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1625	1660	1625	1650	1,020
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.06	5,102,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	810	825	810	820	23,240
Ipeople Inc.	4.05	4.05	4	4	66,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.046	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	5,600,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	22,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	1,386,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1335	1345	1330	1335	189,310
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	18,600,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	300
Manila Electric Co. B	23	23.75	23	23.75	149,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.4	6.1	6.3	6,092,000
Petron Corp.	3.35	3.45	3.35	3.4	1,397,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	70,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	2,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	173,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	6,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	1,150,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	3,069,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	46,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	200,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	33	33	33	33	200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	86,300
RFM Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	240,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	190,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	58	80,600
San Miguel Corp. B	82	82.5	81.5	82.5	211,600
Universal Robina Corp.	11.75	12	11.75	12	3,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.009	0.008	0.008	27,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	3,802,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.43	1,650,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	233,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.037	0.04	0.037	0.038	3,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	322,000
APC Group Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	850,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	30,000,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.18	0.17	0.175	5,400,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	1.02	0.99	0.99	4,550,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,990,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	350,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.32	130,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.9	2.75	2.8	4,037,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.04	0.043	0.04	0.043	1,000,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	582,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	45.5	44.5	44.5	378,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	700,000
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	3,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.9	3	2.9	3	165,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	5,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.34	1.4	1.34	1.34	1,644,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.42	14,480,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.9	120,000
SM Investments Corp.	244	246	242	246	2,897,900
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.23	8,630,000
Waterfront Phils., Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	770,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	8,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	6,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.075	0.11	0.075	0.105	3,610,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.2	8,462,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.95	1,360,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.48	1.54	1.48	1.5	2,228,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3.05	3	3	57,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.3	2,330,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	2,564,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,300
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	450	450	450	450	390
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.8	14,125,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	960,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	670,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	58,200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.4	1,305,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	160,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	190,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	50,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	210,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	5,676,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	12,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	40,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,510,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.33	7,710,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	3,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	25,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	9,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.92	0.96	0.92	0.94	1,320,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.08	3,981,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	36	36.5	35.5	35.5	45,900
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	50,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	1,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.4	2.4	14,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.175	4,410,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	240,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	5,792,840	141,234,670.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	191,334,840	1,212,452,900.00
PRO	81,546,000	178,672,860.00
Mining	64,206,900	11,022,280.00
OIL	60,664,000	1,244,250.00
GRAND TOTALS :	403,544,580	1,544,626,960.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	540.64	UP 8.78
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,883.96	UP 12.86
PRO	705.04	UP 9.55
Mining	2,707.15	UP 11.44
OIL	2.43	DOWN 0.05
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,137.32	UP 16.20
Composite	1,834.06	UP 15.19

NO. OF ADVANCES: 37, NO. OF DECLINES: 28, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 51, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 116, NO. OF TRADES: 2,620

DISCLOSURES

LORENZO Shipping Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 7, Tuesday, 9 a.m. at the Dusit Hotel, Makati. The record date for stockholders entitled to notice and vote is May 3.

* * *

PHILIPPINE National Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 27, 9 a.m. at the FCC marketing office, Corporate Avenue, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Record date is April 29.

* * *

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. disclosed that its number of common stock shares is 991,096,382, and has a total of 29,186,365 treasury shares.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. announced the elected directors of the company for the year 2005-2006 are: Felipe U. Yap, Bryan U. Yap, Felicitas Aquino-Arroyo, Charles L. Bradish, John D. Fairfield, Ricardo V. Puno, Jr. and Ricardo S. Salonga. Rey C. Espinosa and Wilfredo C. Tecson are independent directors.

* * *

PHILIPPINE National Bank confirmed a news article that the joint technical committee of the government has chosen ING Bank as the financial adviser for the joint sale process of 67 percent of PNB shares of stock. ***Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research***

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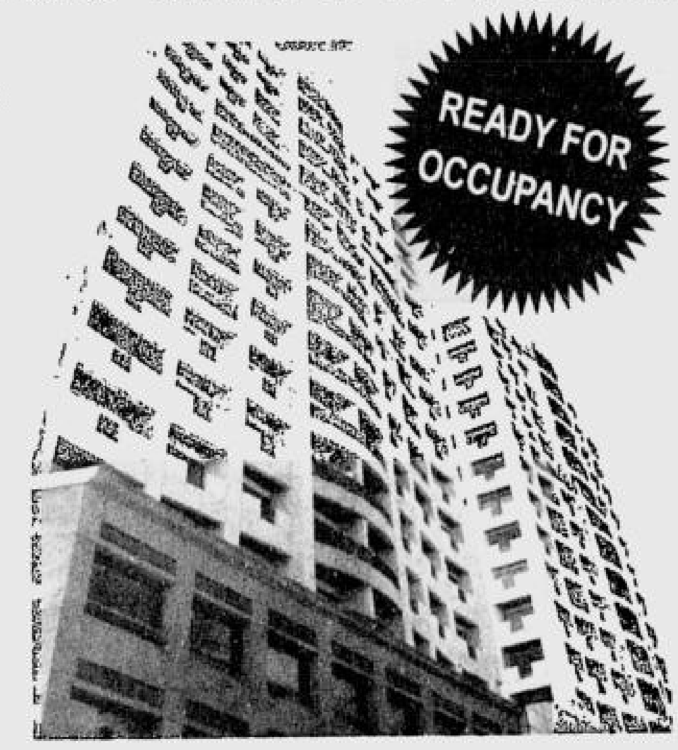

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F.A. 37.40 sqm	P 1,049,630.00	F.A. 17.4 sqm	P 427,344
F.A. 43.20 sqm	P 1,213,056.00	F.A. 19.0 sqm	P 485,376
F.A. 52.50 sqm	P 1,471,120.00	F.A. 20.3 sqm	P 498,568
F.A. 66.50 sqm	P 1,771,826.00	F.A. 21.0 sqm	P 537,600
F.A. 65.00 sqm	P 2,007,200.00	F.A. 26.0 sqm	P 687,360
F.A. 75.20 sqm	P 2,235,712.00	F.A. 32.6 sqm	P 833,536
F.A. 87.70 sqm	P 2,608,182.00	F.A. 57.0 sqm	P 1,385,510
F.A. 98.40 sqm	P 2,874,156.00	F.A. 64.0 sqm	P 1,503,216
F.A. 107 sqm	P 2,842,982.00	F.A. 103 sqm	P 2,417,292

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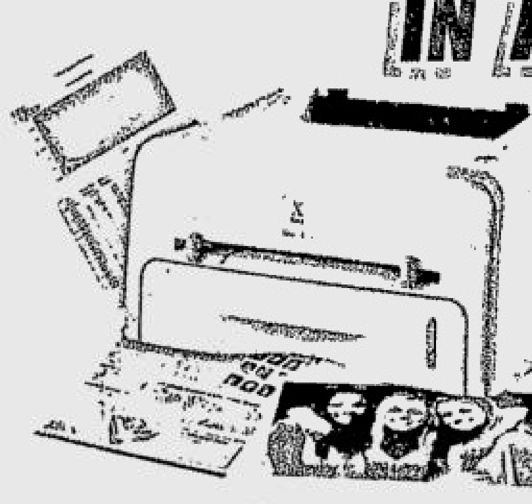

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Participating Stores

Store	Phone
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Compex - Tutuban Mall	2531615
Diamond Dreamchum	5227420
Mega Merge	7362649
Best Buy Computer	2548547
Pioneer Computer	4009598
Alabang	
Compex - SM South Mall	8067006
Starapple-SM South Mall	8007026/27
Dreamchum II	8003691
Compex - Festival Mall	8503654
PC Madness-Festival Mall	8503859
Starapple - Festival Mall	8503942
Compex - SM Sucat	8254467
PC Supplies	8524293
Quezon City	
MCA CD Romania	3238888
Bayan PC	6870710
SmartLink System	4445574
Techpoint	7231254
PC Madness	7248472
Cainta Rizal	
Compex - Sta Lucia Mall	6465640
Caloocan	
Pinnacle Technologies	323 8888
Multi Trust Computer	363 1239
Shangrila	
Starapple	6374295
SM MegaMall	
Compex	6331862
Villman	6830532
Brochiere	6332172
SM West	
Compex	9204610
Villman	9267322
Amazon	4266860
CNO Computer	4265669
Data Core	9264278
Acenet	4264278
PC Chain	9252228
Makati	
Compex - Parksquare	9288382
Villman - Parksquare	7527758
Starapple-Makati Cinema	8111422/24
PC Outlet - Glorieta	8923716
Quezon City (Gilmore)	
PC Specialist I	7232950/60
PC Specialist II	4100158
PC City	7051326
PC Outlet	4102829
PC House	7264314
PC Options	4151488
Think PC-IT Plaza	7260535
PC Gilmore	7213496
PC Corner	7232837
Greenhills Carpark	
Acenet Greenhills	7258749
Luzon	
Acecom - Tarlac	(045)9827924
Pinnacle Technology - Bulacan	(044) 6620634
Planet Earth - Vigan	(077) 6320546
Benerson Enterprises - Tarlac	(045) 9823920
Northpoint Computer - Laoag	(077) 7703521
New Dingto Expressmart - Iriga	(054) 2992550
RCA - Cavite	(054) 2995678
RCA - Lucena	(042) 6603899
RCA - Naga	(054) 8118483
Prologue - Laguna	(049) 5362057
PC 4 Me - LaUnion	(072) 888 2249
SKM - La Union	(072) 8885339
Laser Marketing - Baguio	(074) 4425854
PC King - Baguio	(074) 4428357
Visayas	
Delta Merchandising-Iloilo	(033) 3363196
Hardycom - Bacolod	(034) 4338705
Technoshop	(034) 4332136
XCOMP - Cebu	(032)2545186
JOEBZ - Tacloban	(053)3212323
Bacolod Sure Computer Inc.	(034)4351949
Mindanao	
Datavision - Iligan	(063) 221 2973
Global PC Computer - Butuan	(085) 3411188
Columbia Computer - Butuan	(085)3414956
Wren Computer - Davao	(082) 2240052
Digital Interface - Davao	(082) 2272282
Coneco Sales - Cotobato	(064)4218193
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monitored by CalPERS, the top 10 scorers were Hungary (2.88), Czech Republic (2.75), Poland (2.71), Taiwan (2.71), Chile (2.71), South Korea (2.58), Israel (2.54), South Africa (2.46) and Brazil (2.29). Three countries—India, Jordan and Mexico—shared the 10th place with an equal rating of 2.25.

The Philippines' score was the ninth in the bottom list, sharing the same score with Sri Lanka.

CalPERS had approximately $3.9 billion invested in these emerging markets as of end-February this year.

The pension fund has assets totaling more than $182 billion. It provides retirement and health benefits to 1.4 million state and local public employees and their families.

LRT 1 . . .

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dro Mendoza earlier said.

The LRT Line 1 extension would ease the bottleneck in Bacoor. This could compliment the Coastal Road project from Bacoor to Kawit and Noveleta.

Once in place, Cavite commuters can access the existing LRT and MRT lines.

Robles said that if SNC Lavalin loses in the Swiss challenge, the government would have to pay what it had invested so far in developing the plans.

The Canadian group said it had spent about $20 million.

RP's public debt still worries IMF

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund is worried, and it is urging the Philippines and other developing countries in Asia to immediately undertake measures to address their burgeoning debts or they run the risk of a fiscal crisis.

In a paper entitled "Public Debt in Emerging Markets: Is It Too High?" the IMF noted that some emerging economies were already on the throes of a crisis, with their average debts equivalent to, or over, 70 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP).

The Philippines' latest public sector debt is already way above the 70-percent average debt-to-GDP ratio among emerging economies. The Department of Finance earlier reported that the Philippines' public sector debt stood at P4.593 trillion as of September 2004, or 94.8 percent of the country's GDP.

"Not only does this high level of public debt raise the risk of a fiscal crisis in some countries, but it also imposes costs on the economy by keeping borrowing costs high, discouraging private investment, and constraining the flexibility of fiscal policy," the IMF said in the paper.

The paper was given to representatives of various Asian countries during a two-week seminar that ended last Friday in Singapore. The seminar focused on the impact of government budget on the macro-economy.

The IMF attributed the problem to the developing countries' inability to squarely address their huge debts due to weak revenue collection. It is only when a debt-ridden country posts a budget surplus that it can begin trimming down its debts, as surpluses in the budget are the ones used to pay off debts, the IMF said.

The IMF suggested for the Philippines and other developing countries to widen their tax bases to collect more revenue.

The Philippines' revenue performance has been relatively weak. The share of the Philippine government's revenue collection to GDP is pegged at only 13.5 percent, or lower than the 16 percent posted by Malaysia and other neighboring countries.

Aside from the Philippines, the IMF also noted the poor revenue performances of India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Costa Rica and China. These countries have revenue-to-GDP ratio of below 20 percent.

The bank also said developing countries should rely less on external debts, and more on domestic ones, to avoid foreign exchange risks. It also said governments should prefer offering long-term rather than short-term debts to improve fiscal flexibility.

DOF data showed that of the Philippines' P4.593 trillion debt, domestic debts accounted for P1.5 trillion, while foreign ones had a bigger share of P3.1 trillion.

PPI: Tuition deregulation doomed open-ended plans

THE REMOVAL of the cap on tuition increases in 1990 assured the slow death of open-ended educational plans, according to an official of Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI).

The PPI official said that the deregulation policy resulted in the present difficulties of many pre-need companies that offered these plans.

"The deregulation policy of government was a death sentence," PPI spokesperson Atty. Jeanette Tecson said. "As soon as the cap was lifted, schools raised their tuition by as much as 36 percent in the following school year alone."

The shift in government policy from controlled to unlimited tuition increases was meant to improve the quality of education. Before deregulation, schools could raise their tuition by no more than 10 percent per year.

In 1990, however, colleges and high schools were allowed to raise their tuition without any cap, provided they consulted the parents and the students, Pacific Plans said.

"That was the start of school fees going beyond 10percent," Tecson said.

PPI had foreseen the present trouble in the early 1990s. That was why it stopped selling "the problem plans way back in 1992," she added.

In 1993, elementary schools were given the same tuition privileges. In 1994, the consultation requirement was dropped and full deregulation took effect.

When the enrollment for the 1995-96 school year opened, some schools raised their tuition by as much as 36 percent from the previous year.

Tecson said the open-ended educational plans exposed pre-need companies to unlimited obligations, while their income was limited.

Also, the industry was hit hard during the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

Beneficiaries enrolled in exclusive schools gained the most since one claim for one semester alone exceeded the total amount they had paid for their plan. Tuition in non-exclusive schools was about half of that in exclusive schools, Tecson said.

PPI asked and was granted by a Makati court to suspend payment to creditors and plan holders, except the tuition for the current enrollment period.

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Erratum:

In the last print ad of PAMI last April 18, 2005, the heading Minimum Yield should have Minimum Placement Instead. Our apologies for whatever confusion this has caused.

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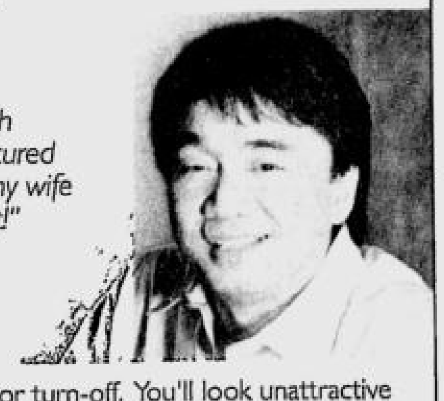

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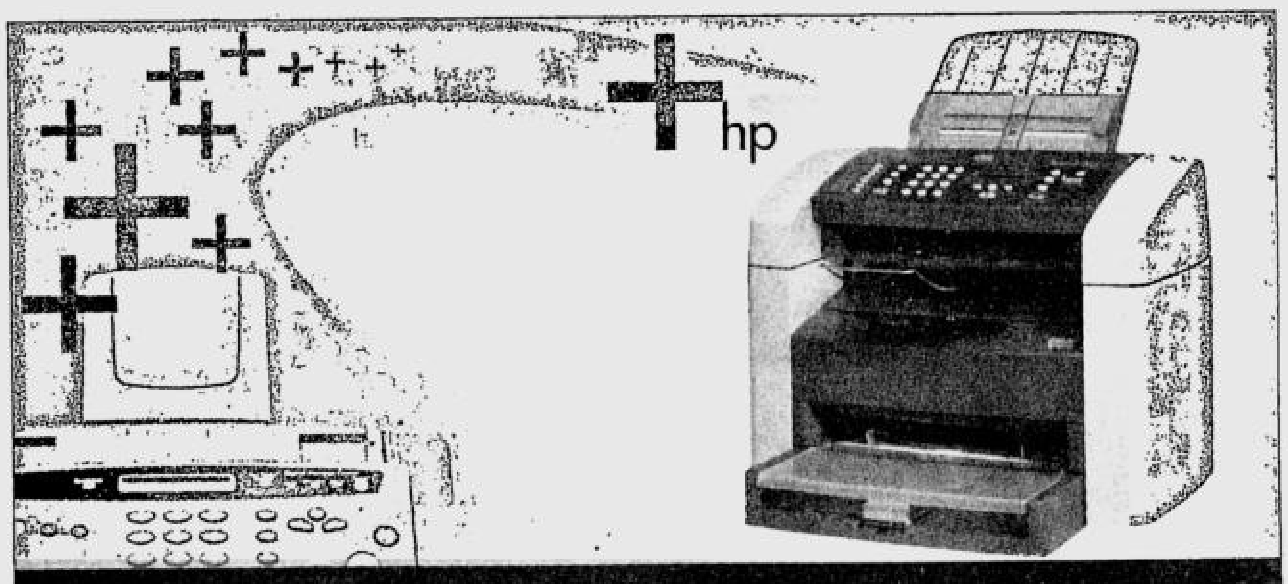

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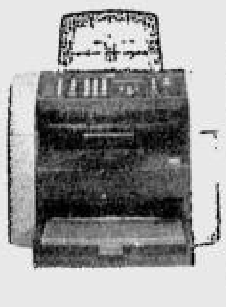

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E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Text us your feedback: inquirer paw name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Dreamer weaves bedtime stories for children

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

THE DREAM started out of sheer boredom. While the rest of the working population dreamt of promotions and high salaries in their cozy beds, Carla Pacis worked the graveyard shift for Citibank's new program, Citibanking. At a time when telebanking was still unheard of, Pacis led the pioneering team of the new system. No doubt a trailblazing project, it would have been an exciting moment for any bank executive. But not for Pacis. She was bored out of her wits. She thought there must be something else she could do. The nearest thing at hand was a pen and paper.

In the cold and quiet office of Citibank, she recalled her trips to Sagada where the Itneg people had faces wrinkled like prunes by the high sun and eyes that twinkled like dew on a bright early morning. Those memories triggered the creation of a short story for children, "The Dream Weavers." As her character found comfort in weaving, Pacis found consolation and fulfillment in the quiet scratching of pen against paper. She continued scribbling way into the night and before the sun rose, Citibank's stationary contained the story of a young weaver who brought life back to a dying village.

A different path

An AB Economics graduate from Assumption College, she had no background in writing. But through her short story, Pacis found a new direction. The road sign that pointed her to this path was a Carlos Palanca Memorial Award. In 1995, she won second prize with "The Dream Weaver," her first try at fiction. "For me that was a sign of God. I was not happy with my job and I was really open for signs from God. So I thought that was one."

ALL ABOUT WORK

Pacis wasted no time. She immediately enrolled and earned her masters in creative writing at the University of the Philippines. Before long, she was weaving words into stories for young readers faster than the Itneg could weave. "I've always liked children. I've always liked children's books. After college, I worked in a preschool and I loved it. I was very impressed at how a story can affect a young audience," explains Pacis. Reading to children, she is always awed by their reaction. "Seeing how words and pictures can transport them to another world is absolutely inspiring."

Publishing world

In July 1996, she published her first book with Adarna Book Services, "Snake in the House." It was the start of many stories for children. Aside from writing, she decided to try out other venues to share and nurture her craft. She started teaching at the Ateneo de Manila University, University of the Philippines and De La Salle University. She also became editor for several anthologies, Mag-O-Zine, an online magazine for children, and Saranggola Magazine.

She says the first step to being published always starts with courage. "You have to be brave enough to submit it to the publisher and you have to know what they are looking for." She advises young hopefuls to be knowledgeable about the market. One should keep on trying and should never be discouraged. "If they do not accept your manuscript, do not give up. It's not that it's not good. It just might not be something they need at that moment."

According to the children's story writer, one should remember to stay true to oneself. "Be open to the suggestions of the editor but also keep in mind that it's your work." She also encourages joining contests and submitting works to workshops. "Verify first, confirm to yourself that you've got what it takes." Several awards and recognition affirmed that Pacis got what it takes. To name a few, she is a multi-award winner of the National Book Award, a recipient of the Gawad C. S. Alabado Award and was once National Bookstore's Author of the Month.

Education and inspiration

Gleaning inspiration from almost anything and everything around her, she authored "All From the Same Tree," "Owl Friends and Sea of Stories: Tales from Sulu" just to name a few. Sea of Stories is the 2000 National Book Awardee for Children's Literature. It consists of enchanting stories of animals living in the island of Sulu. In an effort to document, preserve and promote indigenous literary genres like legends, myths and folktales, Pacis created short stories from tales handed down from one generation to the other. More than the manta rays and turtles of Sulu, Sea of Stories depicts the lives of the people of the islands and brings awareness of culture, heritage and respect for nature.

Pacis also wrote several storybooks for Adarna House including "There's a Snake in the House," "Mayroon Akong Alagang Puno" and "Hipon and Biya." Dwelling on values and morals, Pacis' works are not only entertaining but inspiring as well. "Hipon and Biya" for instance is a story of friendship and teamwork.

In all of these stories, the writer claims that there is always a little bit of something in her. "All of them reflect my life. There is at least an element in each," she affirms. "You can't avoid using your experiences. Your story wouldn't count so much if you didn't use your experience. It is an extension of yourself."

Writers as advocates

Seeing how words and pictures can affect a child, Pacis believes that her purpose does not stop at writing children's tales. "I feel that writers for children in the Philippines should not be just writers. They have to be advocates for reading and literacy because what is the point of writing if nobody is going to read it? You just can't be a writer, you have to be more than that."

Pacis believes that children's literature is not in the mainstream of the academe yet. According to her, children's literature has been around for quite awhile but is still considered as pop culture and marginal. Although there is still a lot of acceptance required in the academe, she claims that children's books are doing better than adult books in terms of publishing in the country.

As part of her thrust, she also co-founded Kuting (Kwentista ng mga Chikiting) and several other movements for reading and literacy in children's literature. During the summer, she conducts writing workshops for adults, teenagers and children and participates in activities and talks that impress the power of reading.

Adventure and exploration

Presently, she is trying to put together a peers' award for published children's books that will be judged by people involved in the industry like librarians, reading coordinators, writers and teachers. Her quest does not end there. She wants to make books as easily available as possible and hopes to open children's sections in public libraries.

PACIS RAMON C. SUNICO/CONTRIBUTOR

In fact, one of her immediate goals is to set up a children's section at the Vigan public library where she traces her roots.

Looking back, she is glad that she only got into writing after a taste of the corporate life. "In a way, I'm glad I didn't discover I liked to write early because I can see it in those who are writing in high school. They don't really have much to write about and that is always a problem; I think. At that age, I think you should be reading more than writing." In the meantime, she advises budding writers to open themselves up to opportunities and adventures. "I would suggest they go out into the world and explore. Travel if they can afford. Try any job that appeals to them or they are attracted to, and it doesn't have to be related to writing. I think writers should really know what is going on. They should be interested in many things."

And that is exactly what she did and keeps doing. When she's not finishing the adventure of underwater friends in paper, she's out experiencing the world through the 259 steps down the streams of Mt. Banahaw or the limestone caves of Sagada. Because who knows what character or spirit lurks between the crevices of these sacred places that will inspire her to weave yet another story that would send children to bed anticipating sweet dreams of manta rays and turtles in magical islands.

(E-mail feedback to candyvillanueva-@pldtdsl.net.*)*

Using words excellently

MY MOTHER'S last name is Tumacder. That means "to stand up" in Ilocano. It's a proud name, carried well by my grandfather Alfredo, who went from not being able to afford a pair of shoes to owning several hectares of farm and ranch land in Cagayan Valley. "Stand up" it means—and that, he certainly did.

My father's last name—one that I have reverted to this month on in the magazine—is Abuyuan. In Ybanag, it means "wild chicken." It's the breed that lives in the forests, smaller than your run-of-the-mill farm chickens, and fiercer than your run-of-the-mill fighting cocks. Kidlat Tahimik, who noticed my "tribal-sounding" last name in editing class back in film school, commented that I must have a "wild animal spirit" living within me. Outwardly, I giggled; inside, I believe I must have crowed with delight.

What's in a name? What's in words? Everything. So you speak, so you create. The thought becomes intention—and thus it begets the power to become Truth. Everything was created with the *Logos*. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, (John 1:1)." In Eastern Mysticism, good words create good karma; bad words are like tiny arrows that fly out toward the person talked about, and fly back to literally pierce the speaker's aura, making him open for attack.

As a writer, I have so much respect for the *Logos* that I once wanted the word in Latin tattooed on my wrist (still do, actually). Every day is a struggle for me to show how much I cherish the *Logos*, how I wield the power of it; how to use words economically, yet effectively. That's excellence for me—the nerdy, no-nonsense thrill of being able to make my point without fanfare or fuss; of being clear, of making a connection. Of being able to use the *Logos* to its full, best potential. Ah, I'd say after digesting a short story by Joanne Harris. That was an excellent read. Simple, yet multilayered; direct, but profound. And similarly, after spending a weekend with friends and family: a day with stories punctuated with laughter, words pregnant with love. What an excellent time. I also like to tie in the importance of words to empowering yourself to move from an undesirable situation to one which you can rejoice in. If you declare love and all that is good, you will attract that as well; you're on your way to achieving excellence in your life—which is the theme of this month's issue of Working Mom magazine.

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan

You'll see this quality imbibed by our Metro Working Mom's cover mom, Cherie Gil, who is taking her journey of excellence with a slowed down pace. "I feel there may be something here; this (setting) may be the right thing," she concedes. After witnessing the tsunami wash away lives, families, and futures, she finds that the path to contentment carries this sign: "Let go."

This month's Metro Working Mom also has a Growing Up section, which is devoted to the issue that will make or break our children, defining how well-adjusted they'll be as adults: Discipline. Celebrity moms such as Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan and Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano, non-celeb moms, and experts give their takes on handling your kids when you're tired and at the end of your rope. The bottom line of all their advice? There's more to discipline than shouting and screaming—even if you think you're fully justified to do so, especially when you're under stress. A hurtful word thrown carelessly into the ethers will find its way into your child's heart and can damage him for a long time. Be careful: the *Logos* can work for you, and against you as well. Be mindful of your words when dealing with your children. Give them good, encouraging words to live on and live by. They could make all the difference between a mediocre bond, or an excellent relationship—with you, themselves, their spirits, our God.

(Gina Abuyuan is editor in chief of Working Mom magazine. Get your copy of the April issue of Working Mom [now in a bigger, better size!] today, with Cherie Gil and lovely daughter Bianca on the cover. Feedback is welcome at gina_abuyuan@abs.pinoycentral.com.*)*

'Who do I need to hire to partly run my business?'

By Tita Datu Puangco

I USUALLY read your column through the Internet, INQ7. I am a seaman. I have two water refilling stations, one with a 2004 sales of P2.1 million gross but a net of only P250,000, due to very high expenses. I manage the business by long distance when I am abroad. My wife assists me. All sales and expenses are with receipts.

My problem now is who to hire to partly manage the business. Will I hire an engineer because most problems are mechanical or a business management graduate? My marketing is okay because we have dealers and walk-ins. We give away filler ads monthly to people within a 10-kilometer radius. Containers are numbered and closely monitored. As a policy, we get deposits from dealers and customers. We have eight crewmen who help with the business whom we provide with lodging and meals on top of a salary. We also have a driver and cashier.

Who can I contact for some business advice?

Business Driven

Thank you for your letter. First of all, let me congratulate you for having a vision of self-sufficiency, beyond your current work as a seaman. I can sense that you have put the money you earned overseas into a growing entrepreneurial venture. You can, in fact, be a role model for our *kababayans* working abroad.

Advice

FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

Recently, taking the last Cathay Pacific flight from the Hong Kong airport, I had the chance to converse with a number of seamen and their perennial worry was the long layoff of as long as 10 months in between contracts. My prayer for them is to find a productive activity that would keep them busy in between jobs.

It is good to note that you have put in place some control mechanisms like receipts, control numbers on containers and a policy on deposits. It takes focus and perseverance to manage your business from a distance. Fortunately in this age of satellites, communications is almost instantaneous. Your venture, I am sure, is a source of bonding and continuous partnership between you and your wife.

Now to answer the problem you raised as to whom to hire. As you mentioned, this person will be hired part-time and will be working closely with your wife. Based on your letter, you mentioned that out of the P2.1 million gross, your net is P 250,000. I get the impression that this is not your "happiness rate" and you wish to increase your net income. If this is the case, you need someone to take a look at the business side, I suggest you hire someone who can review your financial ratios, take a serious look at the "middle line" to find out how you can reduce unnecessary costs.

The challenge for most family businesses is separating the family budget from the business budget. If possible, keep these two separate so it is less difficult to untangle the expense items. You also mentioned that you have two refilling stations but did not mention the performance of the other refilling station. Are you using the same employees to cover the two refilling stations? Try to do some benchmarking. Ask people whose business is also into refilling stations or better still if yours is a franchise to ask your franchisor for some basic data. You then compare your ratios with similar stations in terms of size.

Today is the era of "multiskilling" and multitasking. If you can find a mechanical engineer with a good grasp of the business numbers and a willingness to work part time, so much the better.

For more business advice, please contact Mia, my executive assistant and she will direct you to the right consultant. Our office landlines are 892-2895 or 892-2896 or 892-2898. Looking forward to be of help to you.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

How do you solve a problem at work?

DEAR WW: I read your recent column on identifying problems at work. I have no trouble identifying problems, but sorting out how I can solve them is another story.

Trouble in River City

I think Jacob Wise can help you gain perspective on your dilemma. He's not a business professor, best selling author or corporate executive. He's a shoplifter who was recently arrested in Tulsa, OK. He'd carefully removed the electronic tags from the clothing he was going to steal. The problem was that he'd put all the tags he'd removed in his pocket and set off the shoplifting sensors when he tried to leave the store.

Like Mr. Wise, too many of us set off alarms at work with our bosses and coworkers for failing to have a clear strategy for tackling our workplace problems. I've listed a series of strategies to do this below. For more, check out "The Artist's Way at Work" by Bryan, Cameron and Allen (Morrow, 1998)

Can you take an objective look at the problem? What impact does the problem have on your organization? What data can you get on it? Can you document the costs that the problem causes to your organization? Finally, are you better off not tackling it?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

Can you look at the problem subjectively? The workplace encourages right brain rational thinking. That's good. But any problem requires an appreciation of irrational elements. How does it make you feel? What parts of the problem aren't logical? Do you have the energy to tackle this problem?

How have others solved the problem? I always begin my problem-solving process by checking out other people's solutions. Why reinvent the wheel? What do you wish would happen? Yes, I did use the "w" word—wish. I think that many of us are so trapped in what is possible that we seldom let our imaginations run wild as part of our problem-solving process. My favorite way to do this is to ask, "If I had a magic wand, what would I like to see happen?" If you don't imagine a best case scenario, how will you ever end up there?

How can you get other people invested in addressing the problem? I'm a big believer in the importance of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable in problem solving and learning what is important to your key stakeholders, and striving to define the problem in this context. This often requires defining the problem very specifically in order for others to see how they are negatively impacted by the problem. They then become motivated to solve problems, too.

Have you done your homework? Whenever I would present a big problem to my boss I would always try to anticipate her top questions and create a Q&A sheet addressing them. Do this a time or two and you won't believe the trust your boss will have for your ideas.

Follow these suggestions and you'll solve your problems at work at an alarming rate.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: How would you describe your problem solving skills?

—Bottom of the barrel, 5.4 percent

—Top of the heap, 45.6 percent

—Middle of the pack, 48.8 percent

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

Bear Stearns sees slowdown in RP growth

By Michelle V. Remo

BEAR, Stearns & Co. Inc. expects the growth of the Philippine economy to slow down this year due to uncertainties on how the agriculture sector and electronics industry will perform.

The US-based investment bank said in a statement that the Philippines might not be able to match the 6.1-percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) last year, and likely end up with just a 5-percent growth.

The bank attributed the projected slowdown to the "widespread" drought caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon, which will bring down agriculture production.

Agriculture accounts for roughly a fifth of the domestic economy.

The electronics industry, which accounts for about 70 percent of the Philippines' exports, was not expected to perform any better. The US bank said the electronics sector was facing a sluggish first half.

According to the National Statistics Office, exports slipped 0.6 percent in February to $2.982 billion, putting an end to 15 consecutive months of year-on-year growth.

Bear, Stearns said increasing interest rates would also pull down economic growth this year. A rise in interest rates discourages spending because loans become more expensive.

The BSP last April 7 raised its policy rates by 25 basis points for the first time in 23 months, a move aimed at preventing further hikes in inflation. The hike placed the overnight borrowing rate at 7 percent and the overnight lending rate at 9.25 percent.

"The (BSP's) Monetary Board decided to execute a small rise in policy interest rates as a preemptive move—making it clear to the market that the Monetary Board is prepared to raise interest rates as is necessary," the bank said in its latest paper on the Southeast Asian economies.

Feli to spend ₱1B for property dev't projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FIL-ESTATE Land Inc. said it would earmark P1 billion for major residential and leisure-related projects this year.

The company, with its debt burden now down to only P170 million from P633 million last year, believes it can focus its resources more on new projects.

"We are poised to create new revenues this year. We are confining corporate debt to the project level and we are completely retiring our debt this year," Feli chair Robert John Sobrepeña said in a stockholder's meeting yesterday.

Sobrepeña said it had swapped the bulk of its $1 billion worth of MRT bonds and pieces of property for the reduction of its debts with creditors from P633 million to only P170 million.

Feli is launching a number of projects this year such as the 1,269-hectare Nasugbu Harbor Town, which is envisioned to be a world-class residential and tourism resort.

Sobrepeña said Feli would talk to the SM Group for a possible partnership in this project.

Feli is also developing a 900-hectare property called Laurel Ridge in Laurel, Batangas right along the National Road and overlooking the Taal volcano.

It is also set to launch next year its 400-hectare farm estate Hacienda Pililia in Laguna.

In Naga City, Feli will develop its residential project called Isarog Hills spanning 200 to 300 square meters.

Gov't urged to study options for Malampaya

THE ASSOCIATION of Stock Analysts of the Philippines (Asap) said it was fully supporting the decision of the Cabinet-level Privatization Council to shelve the planned sale of almost half of Philippine National Oil Co-Exploration Corp.'s 10-percent stake in the Malampaya natural gas project.

Asap director Astro del Castillo said the move "will give the government more time to examine its other options on how it can optimize the value of and benefits from the Malampaya stake."

"It is really difficult to let go of a crown jewel," he said.

He added that the suspension of the privatization process "should help the government expand its list of options, including those available in the capital market."

Del Castillo said the suspension of the Malampaya sale "will not, in anyway, dampen investor interest in the country's energy exploration sector."

He said he was expecting the entry of investors into this sector in the very near future, both local and international. He said this was spurred by recent developments in the global oil market, particularly the unabated rise in oil prices.

The Privatization Council revoked its March 22 instruction to PNOC to go ahead with the planned sale of the 4.9-percent Malampaya stake to a South Korean consortium led by the LG group.

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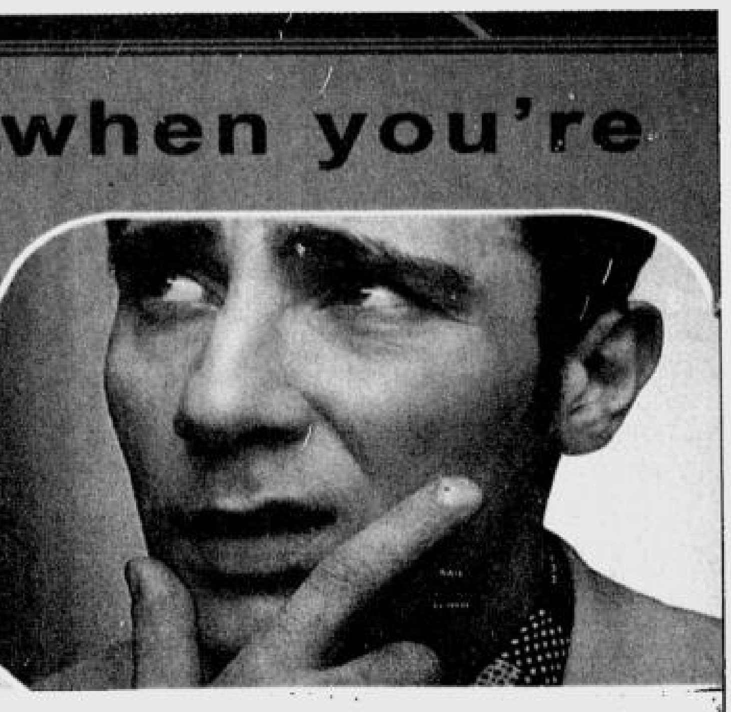

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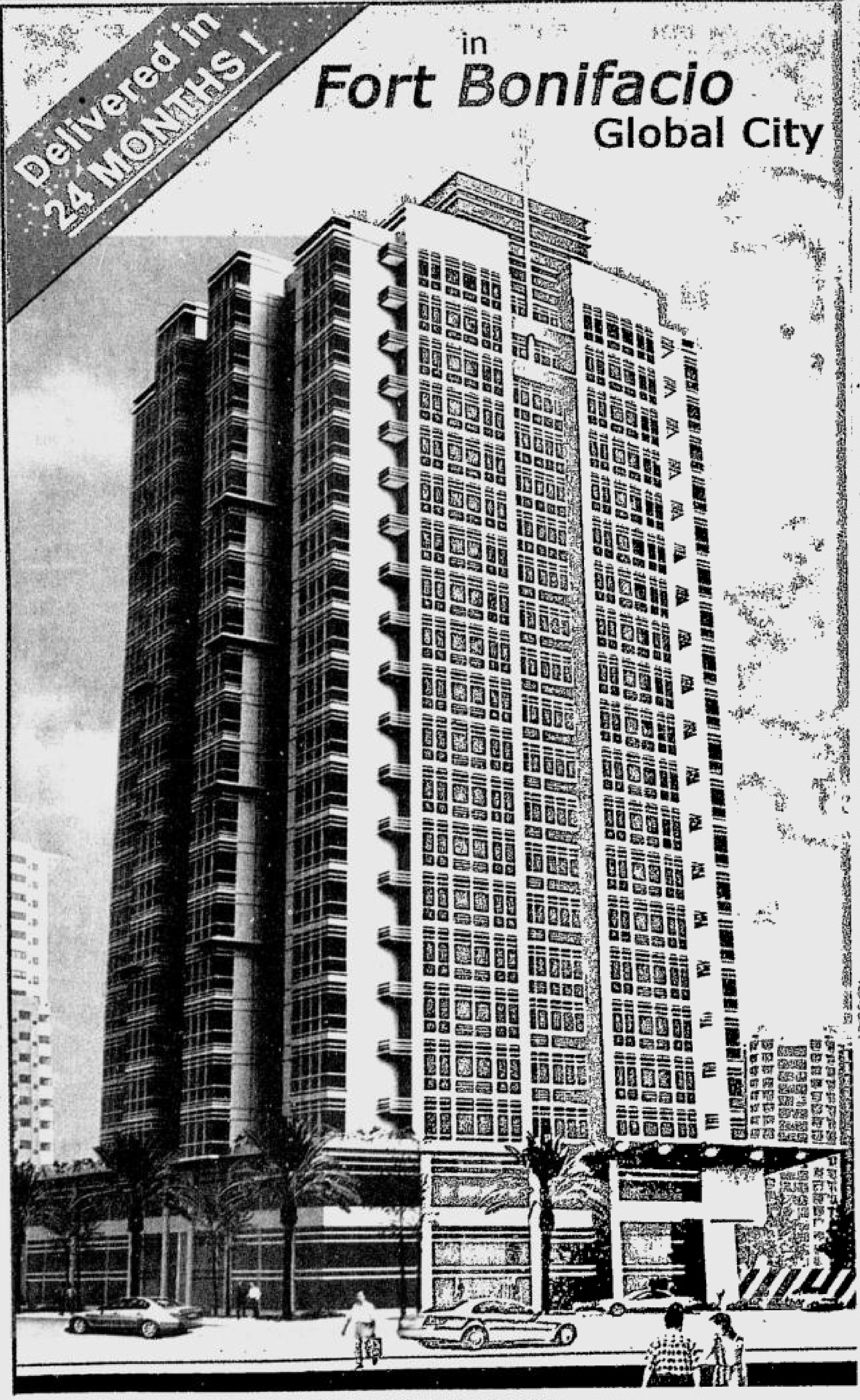

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4-year T-bond rate drops to 11.128%

By Michelle V. Remo

AWASH with cash, banks yesterday scrambled for the four-year Treasury bonds, forcing its rate to drop to 11.128 percent.

The new rate for the four-year T-bond was 87.2 basis points lower than the 12 percent recorded in January.

"Again, this shows a high level of liquidity in the market," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz in a briefing after the auctions.

The high level of liquidity among banks was apparent in their bids. The four-year T-bond was almost twice oversubscribed, as tenders reached P8.38 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P4.5 billion.

Aside from liquidity, market players said the drop in the rate for the four-year T-bond was also their positive response to the progress of the Value-Added Tax bill, which is now being deliberated in the bicameral conference committee of Congress.

"The bicam has agreed to adopt a single rate for the VAT, and we believe that [the Senate and the House of Representatives] will agree on a 1-percent increase of the VAT rate from 10 to 11 percent," said Carlos Ylagan, chief economist of the asset management group of the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

The economist explained that the market favored increasing the VAT rate because it would generate more revenue for the government.

The huge appetite shown by the market for the four-year debt instrument yesterday showed its continued interest for government securities. Last Monday, all Treasury bill tenors were likewise oversubscribed, prompting a drop in the rates of the 91- and 182-day T-bills.

Also, the T-bill rate last week slid to 6.657 percent, 2.8 basis points lower than the 6.685 percent recorded the previous week. The 182-day T-bill rate also dropped by 14 basis points to 7.85 percent.

Only the rate for the 364-day T-bill rose, although bids for the one-year debt instrument were also high. The 364-day T-bill rate rose by 64.5 basis points to 8.792 basis points. But tenders for the one-year T-bill reached P3.855 billion, higher than the government's offering of only P2 billion.

SMIC: No lapses in disclosure

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM INVESTMENTS Corp. (SMIC), the flagship firm of mall magnate Henry Sy Sr., yesterday denied allegations that it failed to reveal facts regarding court cases over the ownership of its Hacienda Looc property in Nasugbu, Batangas.

SMIC said in a statement that had not violated disclosure rules, adding that claims over the Hacienda Looc were dismissed by the Regional Trial Court of Batangas. The Department of Agrarian Reform also cancelled the land claims in favor of SMIC.

Domingo Villafranca and Nomer del Mundo, both said to be trustees of claimants of Hacienda Looc, filed a complant with the Securities and Exchange Commission, alleging that SMIC breached disclosure rules when it submitted filings for its initial public offering.

They claimed that the ownership of Manila Southcoast Development Corp., a subsidiary of SMIC, was under legal dispute.

Villafranca and del Mundo also alleged that Hacienda Looc comprised 8,655 hectares of government land and were illegally transferred to MSDC, in violation of agrarian and public bidding laws.

They said SMIC should have disclosed these facts for the protection of the investing public who are being lured to invest in SMIC.

SMIC conducted the biggest initial public offering at the stock exchange this year.

The Hacienda Looc property is estimated to be valued at P12.3 billion and is the fourth largest asset of the SM Group.

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Solon seeks stricter billing rules on telcos

By Clarissa S. Batino

ISABELA Representative Rodolfo Albano III has urged Congress to pass a law requiring mobile phone companies to bill customers on a six-second pulse cycle.

This proposed law will put an end to the current practice where the duration of phone calls is rounded off to the nearest minute, which Albano said resulted in additional payments on the part of the consumer.

"Congress must come up with policies that would help the National Telecommunications Commission regulate the industry. The policy was already in place and it should be implemented. The court would have to rule in favor of consumers," said Albano in an interview.

Billing concerns, including the shift to the six-second pulse, were supposed to have been addressed by an NTC billing circular issued as early as 2000.

The circular was not implemented, however, as telcos won an injunction from the Quezon City Regional Trial Court preventing the NTC from implementing its order.

The NTC elevated its case to the Court of the Appeals, and later to the Supreme Court. The High Court, however, tossed back the case to the Quezon City court in 2003, where it is still waiting resolution.

The NTC circular also requires telcos to register the SIM cards of prepaid customers to help regulate the industry, prevent text scams and discourage phone theft.

"This is a clear indication of their [players] resistance to regulation that diminishes their rapacity for profit," Albano said in a statement.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said the NTC would immediately implement the billing circular once the court had lifted the restraining order.

Metrobank eyes pact with foreign firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

METROPOLITAN Bank and Trust Co. is bullish on the prospects of the mining industry but has no plans of increasing its stake in Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp., one of the country's biggest mining companies.

"We are over 20 percent. We are (one of) the biggest shareholders as far as we can tell. Everybody's bullish on the mining industry with the Supreme Court decision. But I am not aware of any attempt to increase the bank's stake at this point," Ricardo Puno,Jr. Metrobank Bank's adviser and newly-elected nominee to Lepanto's board said.

Informed sources said, however, that Metrobank was looking to forge alliances with foreign partners that will invest in Lepanto, to strengthen its influence on company decisions.

Market talks pointed to a brewing proxy war between the Metrobank group and the group of veteran broker and mining tycoon Felipe Yap, which control mores than 20 percent of Lepanto A shares and 24 percent of class B shares, which are open to foreign buyers.

Sources close to the group of Yap denied that there was a proxy war.

Metrobank and the Yap group have not always seen eye-to-eye on certain business policies but minor disagreements were quickly ironed out.

But if prospective foreign investors vote the way of Metrobank, then the bank would have a bigger voice in the boardroom.

Sources said a group of Australian mining firms had already approached Metrobank on the possibility of investing in Lepanto.

Lepanto in the first quarter produced 17,000 ounces of gold, 15 percent down from last year, resulting in P40 million in net losses.

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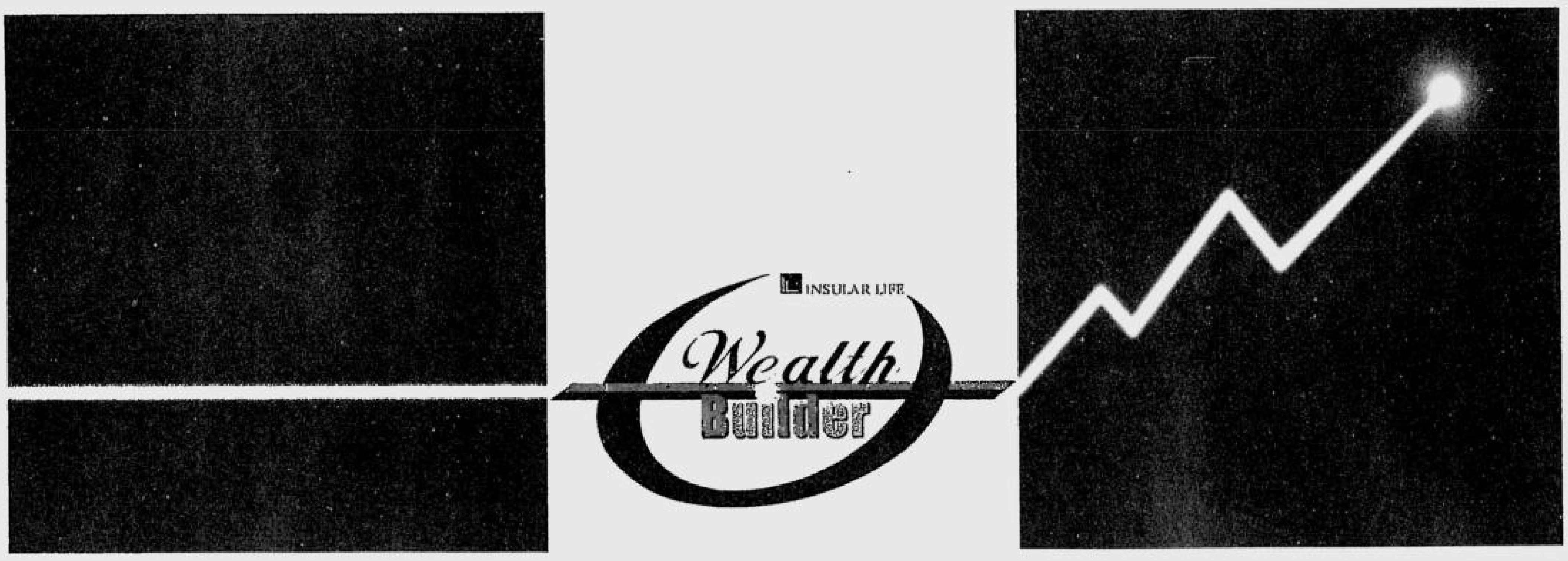

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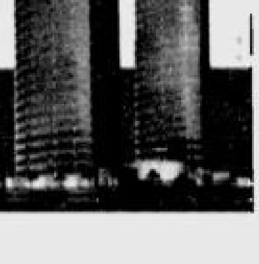

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A world beyond the car window

WHILE stuck in traffic, a little boy or girl knocks on your car window selling sampaguita or simply begging for some change. What do you do? What do you feel? Some feel disturbed and just knock back and the child seems to automatically know what it means. Some roll down their window and give yet hoping that there won't be another one waiting in line. But sometimes, some of us wonder about them and the world beyond the car window.

Amidst hectic working schedules and family commitments, employees of First Gen Corp (First Gen) took time off to meet and interact with street children. First Gen partnered with Hands On Manila Foundation Inc, a non-profit volunteer management organization to participate in the Breakfast Club. First Gen employees had the chance to share a full breakfast and spend quality time with street children living within the areas of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Guadalupe Bridge along Edsa. Breakfast Club activities are conducted in coordination with Child Hope Asia, a foundation that provides street-based education to kids living in the streets and slums of Metro Manila.

The partnership of First Gen and Hands On Manila aims to establish a long-term and sustainable volunteer program for First Gen employees. Hands on Manila links individuals and organizations with various non-government organizations that directly assist underprivileged children, disabled, elderly, homeless people and also those active in caring for the environment. Some employees chose to spend their time with street children, who oftentimes are the most neglected by urban dwellers. Each First Gen volunteer partnered with a street child and spent some time to get to know each other better. The volunteers also organized different games for everyone to enjoy.

First Gen volunteers have already sponsored and participated in three Breakfast Club activities and intend to continue doing so. The Breakfast Club has allowed them to share and give but more importantly, enjoy the company of the children. "I felt happy that I was able to share with these kids", says Sally Ladignon, a senior manager of one of the First Gen subsidiaries, Bauang Private Power Corp (BPPC). Nico Lagos, BPPC HR assistant, also shares he "used to see street kids as a nuisance on the road but now it's different because I know more about their lives". A single mom also said she wants to bring her own kids to the Breakfast Club so they will learn not to be afraid of them.

The children on the other hand, were so happy to feel that some people took time out to be with them. A child does not only need to be fed and educated but also needs the reassurance of knowing that there are people who care about them. The Breakfast Club is not simply about First Gen volunteers sharing a meal. It is sharing one's time and one's self. It is recognizing that there is a world beyond the car window. And in that world there are people who, like us, who seek the attention that they rightfully deserve.

CHILDHOPE kids with First Gen employees.

PONDO NG PINOY LAUNCHED AT CCP

His Excellency Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales DD of the Ardiocese of Manila spearheaded the launching of the Pondo ng Pinoy program at the Immaculate Conception Chapel of the Central Colleges of the Philippines (CCP) last March 8. The affair, which was chaired and coordinated by Dr. Elena S. Reyes, CCP-VPAA was highlighted by a concelebrated mass with the archbishop as the main celebrant. Msgr. Vicente Bauzon, Campus Ministry coordinator of the Archdiocese, Rev. Fr. Benjie Ledesma, CCP chaplain, and Rev. Fr. Reginal Malicdem, secretary of the Achbishop, were the other concelebrants. A reception hosted by the school administration immediately followed at the CCP studio theatre.

Westgate Center's summer arts workshop for kids, adults

PAINTER, sculptor and author Victor Bella, in cooperation with Westgate Center, Filinvest Alabang and Gymboree Play & Music Drawing, will hold his 11th Painting, Anime Sculpture Workshop for Kids and Adults.

Drawing and painting Workshop include organized, fast and easy systematic procedures on how to handle pencil, colored pencils, pen-ink, oil pastels, watercolor, oil and acrylic. Learn everything you need to know in both classic and modern art the easy and enjoyable way, or you may choose to specialize in any drawing and painting medium favored.

Advance Class covers body part or portrait casting for glow-in-the-dark sculpture, stained glass or acrylic painting and glow-in-the-dark 3-dimensional flower dome sculpture.

The Anime or Cartoon Drawing, Painting & Sculpture is best for kids and teens and covers the fun ways on how to draw, paint and sculpture kids' favorite anime or cartoon characters of choice such as Dragon Ball Z, Digimon, Sailormoon, Power Puff Girls, Lilo and Stitch, to name a few. Mediums include pen and ink, poster paint and polymer clay.

For enrolling students 5 to 21 years old, one parent is entitled to a free admission in one of Bella's bonus art classes such as Candle Making or Fountain Making Bonus Classes. As an added bonus, all Victor Bella workshop enrollees are entitled to a special package for all kids ages 2 years old and below of enrolling families to a special annual membership of P1,200 (old rate) plus 20-percent discount to Gymboree Play and Music, Westgate Center branch, the world leader in parent-child interactive programs. Each enrollee will receive a free Gymboree calendar and Dish Set plus unlimited complimentary Gymplay coupons during the duration of the workshop.

Learn pure art and be part of this opportunity to enjoy the fun and achieve one's renewed confidence in bringing out the creativity in your kids through artworks.

Lessons will be held at the Westgate Center, Filinvest Alabang. Interested parties may call 0920-4880029 or 550-4473 for inquiries and enrollment procedures, or visit Victor Bella's website at www.geocities.com/victor_bella.

LISTERINE POCKETPAKS PARTNERS WITH PAL

Listerine PocketPaks, named as one of the world's best innovations in oral care, now conquers the skies onboard Philippine Airlines. The popular oral strips dissolve instantly and kill 99.9 percent of germs that cause bad breath, making them the traveler's ultimate oral care companion. Listerine PocketPaks will be distributed with all Philippine Airlines Mabuhay (Business) Class meal, enabling passengers to experience the instant, fresh breath that Listerine PocketPaks can provide on their flights. This refreshing treat may be enjoyed by Philippine Airlines Mabuhay Class passengers traveling between Manila and Cebu, Davao, Puerto Princesa, and General Santos City from now until June 30. Shown are PAL's product and research development officers Debbie Coquia Cuyegkeng and Bettina Q. de Vera, together with Stratworks account executive Melissa Lopez representing Listerine PocketPaks.

MEN'S HEALTH CHECK AT ROTARY MAKATI-AYALA

Dr. Wilfredo Tagle, a consulting urologist at the Quezon City Medical Center, discusses the importance of better sexual health and the problem of erectile dysfunction during a recent meeting of the Rotary Club of Makati-Ayala, District 3830. The activity is part of Men's Health Check, a program undertaken by Pfizer to increase awareness on sexual health and encourage men to see their doctors regularly.

'Pilipino, ang Galing Mo!'

WHEN husband-and-wife business partners Antonio and Josefina Elicaño started Empower as a multi-level marketing business division of The Peak Marketing Group in 2001, they had one goal in mind: Encourage the spirit of nationalism and positive Filipino values through their business. Radically opposed to the view that the country's economic state is hopeless and helpless, they decided that in their way, they could help their countrymen have a better quality of life.

Little did they know that it was also the innate desire for people to improve their quality of life that pushed their Moreishi product lines to the forefront, addressing the needs of both medically ill and health-conscious individuals looking to supplement their health with nature's abundant gifts found in herbs. With a team of medical advisers led by Dr. Vicenta Escobar, they realized the supreme benefit of obtaining the synergistic power through combining several premium herbs found in the Philippines. But beyond pills and capsules, they found it could be made into products that fit into everyday life: coffee, juice, chocolate and tea. Better yet, all Empower products are BFAD registered to ensure the safety of the formulations.

The effect Empower's products have had on the network of individuals who spread the goodness of Empower products are as amazing as the products themselves. Many Empower members share dramatic stories. For instance, a young group of friends who were so hard up and couldn't find a suitable job to sustain them were on the brink of starvation. They discovered Empower, and along with the technical and moral support given to members, they persevered and now earn enough to support themselves, their families and still have money put away for a rainy day. This is truly proof that the Elicaño couple's vision to help others has worked both for members and consumers to attain a better quality of life.

For more information about Empower products and membership, call 534-6843 and 534-6702 or 04.

ANTONIO and Josefina Elicaño

Bits & Clips

PSLIS seminar-workshop

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Librarians and Information Specialists (PSLIS) will hold a seminar-workshop on "Digitization: A Preservation Tool?" on April 21 and 22 at Don Bosco Technical College Gen. Kalentong, Mandaluyong City. For registration, reservation and other inquiries, call 724-1994; 726-0931 (local 253); 527-9672; 0916-7120341 or e-mail esbm@myownemail.com.

AG Datacom's anti-hacking system

IN RESPONSE to the increased incidence of criminal hacking of corporate networks in the Philippines, AG Datacom Philippines is offering a powerful, internationally certified intrusion prevention system (IPS) to the market. AG Datacom introduced computerized call billing systems to the Philippines and is a distributor and systems integrator of end-to-end telecom solutions. The company will launch BroadWeb Corp's NetKeeper, an advanced IPS solution, during a free seminar for IT managers, network security managers and other technical specialists on April 20, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Hotel Intercontinental Makati. AG Datacom has been appointed exclusive distributor in the Philippines for NetKeeper. A workshop for resellers and dealers interested in offering NetKeeper to their clients will also be held on April 21, 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. For inquiries, call TeamAsia at 757-3500 local 224.

Marriage Encounter in Tagaytay

THE GALILEE Catholic Charismatic Community will hold a Marriage Encounter Weekend Seminar at the St. Joseph Marello Retreat House, Tagaytay City from April 22 to 24. The marriage encounter is designed to renew marriages by offering the chance for spouses to rediscover each other. The program has also been proven helpful in healing marriages on the rocks or couples who are struggling to stay together. For inquiries, call Cris at 0917-8403052, or Cora at 0917-5003961, or Jingle at 0917-8427896. All calls will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Seminar on branding

STRATEGIC marketing and communications firm TeamAsia will conduct a seminar on building enduring corporate brands April 21 at ExportBank Plaza, Makati City. "Building and Sustaining a Strong Corporate Brand" discusses the value of corporate branding in a market beset by increasing advertising costs, short product cycle times, and the emergence of non-traditional communication channels. The seminar will cover developing and marketing distinctive corporate brands and reveal time-tested ways to sustain this image consistently over the years. For more information, call 757-3500.

Enriching SEA collections

A 2-DAY International conference on "Enriching Indigenous Southeast Asian Collections in Libraries" will be held on April 20 and 21 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati. For more inquiries, call the CHRDF at 927-9858 or 926-4708 and look for Jennifer Pion.

Samu't-Sari 2005

AN ECO-MARKET for eco-friendly products, dubbed "Samu't-Sari 2005", is slated for the Earth Day Celebration April 22 to 24 at the National Ecology Center, East Avenue, Quezon City, fronting the Philippine Heart Center. It will be a one-of-a-kind bazaar featuring eco-friendly products, healthy/organic food, arts and crafts, personal and home care products, pet care products, home décor, eco-books, and many more. Pinoy scientists and entrepreneurs, who have unique and eco-friendly products, are most welcome to join the bazaar. The bazaar will also feature selected green practices and technologies as well as Pinoy inventions. Bazaar hours start at 7 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. For inquiries, call the organizer Zero Waste National Recycling Movement of the Philippines Foundation at 925-4718 or 0918-4210729, or 6555674/0917-4777749.

'Tips to be business smart'

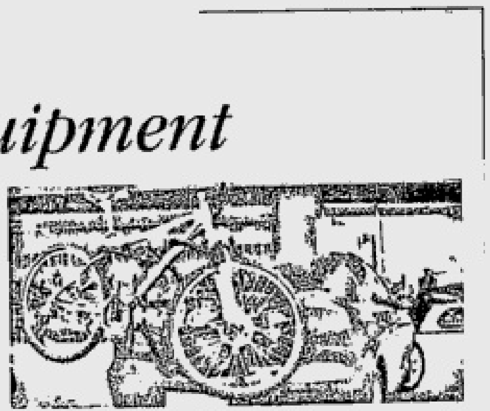
TO ENABLE Filipinos to cope with the current economic difficulties, World Class Financial, in cooperation with Pamilyang OFW-SME Network Foundation Inc. will hold a one-hour free seminar on "Tips to be Business Smart" at the Market! Market! Activity Center, Fort Bonifacio, Global City, Taguig, from April 21 to 24, which will be open for the general public. The schedules are, on April 21, Thursday, at 6 p.m. and from April 22 to 24, at 7 p.m. Companies, organizations, associations, cooperatives, educational institutions, who want the said free seminar to be conducted within their premises can make arrangements with Manuel Roxas de Jesus at 0916 4121823, or 851-1476 (7 to 9 a.m.).

ProductFiles

Bike equipment

IF YOU have more luggage than what your vehicle will allow, like mountain bikes, let Thule provide you with the solution. Thule Bike Rack Systems of Sweden makes it possible to carry your bike anywhere and anytime. Thule Bike Rack systems are designed to be a perfect fit for most Japanese, European and American cars, AUVs and SUVs.

Made of cutting edge materials, Thule Bike Rack Systems are waterproof and theft-proof and have undergone stringent OEM quality testing and has passed the four seasons test as required by the Ford Q1, QS9000, the German DIN 75302, German TUV and the ISO norm 11154 and 14001. Go ahead, explore the great outdoors and welcome summer with Thule.



Shown is a Mazda 3 equipped with a Thule Bike Rack system. Thule's line of roof boxes, bike racks and accessories are on display at its Showroom at the Equitable Bank Building, Ortigas Avenue corner Roosevelt Street, Greenhills, San Juan. Call 744-6367 or log on to www.thule.com.

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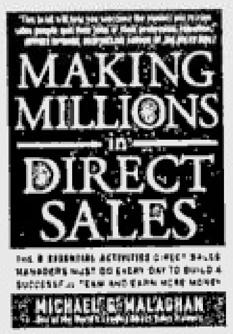

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During his 40 - plus year career, Malaghan has recruited, trained and led sales teams that sold more than $2 billion worth of products and has enabled many of his direct staff to become millionaires in their own right. He is the head of Malaghan Sales Management Development, author of "Making Millions in Direct Sales," and one of the most respected names in the sales industry. For more info, visit **www.malaghan.com.**

For in-depth training programs, contact Training Works/ ECCP at tel. no. (632) 845-1324, (632) 759-6680.

Malaghan's precise directions will have you champing at the bit to apply his proven techniques. When the session is finished, you will charge back to the office to start some sales generating changes that can earn additional millions for your company and a performance star for your sales organization!

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
SESSION 1: CREATING & LEADING A TEAM THAT MAKES MILLIONS IN SALES

Is your sales team missing opportunities? "YES," says Mike Malaghan. "And they are right under your nose!" In fact, all sales organizations have unrealized sales generating potential that once fully tapped could mean additional millions for your company. Discover why and what you as the senior leader can do about it NOW!

Malaghan will share secrets that will explode your prospecting, selling, training and motivational opportunities. Learn how Mike's 8 Essential Activities can change your current results — practically overnight!

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
SESSION 2: 60 SALES TECHNIQUES TO MAKE MORE MILLIONS

Hold on to your seats for a breathless two-hour presentation that will make you more money in 2005. Any salesperson can do better with better practices. This is a "do this" seminar.

Malaghan's menu of 60 sales management practices will show you how to sell more, train better, be better motivated and increase your staying power in sales. You will learn how to use the 14 key motivators, how to put excitement in your training and sales meetings, and how to build a charismatic leadership persona.

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Cellphone No. 09175332193 or 09186248876

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: April 20, 2005
Contract Identification No: FDA-2005-P02
World Bank Grant No: TF026783

1. The PARTNERSHIP OF PHILIPPINE SUPPORT SERVICE AGENCIES, INC. (PHILSSA) has received a grant from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of UPSCALING URBAN POOR COMMUNITY RENEWAL SCHEME-PROJECT and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for FDA-2005-P02 for Water source Development of Sitio Dormitory Brgy. Nagkaisang Nayon Novaliches, Quezon City covering Construction of Elevated Water Tank, Deepwell Drilling and Pumphouse facilities as Package II. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The Foundation for Development Alternatives, Inc. (FDA), the implementing Agency of PHILSSA invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Water Source Development of Sitio Dormitory Brgy. Nagkaisang Nayon, Novaliches, Quezon City covering Construction of Elevated Water Tank, Deepwell Drilling and Pumphouse facilities as Package II.
3. Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased at Foundation for Development Alternatives Inc. (FDA) at No. 144 B. Gonzales St., Loyola Heights, Quezon City, for a nonrefundable fee of P2,500.00 for each set. Interested bidders may examine the bid documents and obtain further information at the same address. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference will be held on May 6, 2005 at 2:00 in the afternoon at Foundation for Development Alternatives Inc. (FDA) at No. 144 B. Gonzales St., Loyola Heights, Quezon City.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of 120 calendar days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of 2.5% of the Contractor's bid, and shall be delivered to Foundation for Development Alternatives Inc. (FDA) at No. 144 B. Gonzales St. Loyola Heights, QuezonCity on or before May 20, 2005, not later than 2:00 in the afternoon, at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.

(PDI--April 20, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that Celebrity Sports Plaza Stock Certificate No. 1897 with 30,000 shares of Drs. FE V. FERNANDEZ has been lost. If no contest is received new certificates will be issued.
(PDI- April 6, 13 & 20, 2005)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(PUBLIC BIDDING)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) wishes to invite bidders for the procurement of **BLADE SERVERS and PERIPHERALS.**

Request for Proposal (RFP) can be obtained from April 14, 2005 to April 28, 2005, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Office of the Secretariat – Bids and Awards Committee (OSBAC) Room 1804, 18th Floor Citystate Centre #709 Shaw Blvd. Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00.

PhilHealth had provided funds for this project. The approved budget for this contract is **Php 10,000,000.00.**

A pre-bid conference will be held on April 28, 2005 at 1:30p.m. at the OSBAC (Rm. 1804).

The bidders shall prepare their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposal in three separate sealed envelopes and drop in the respective bid boxes located at the above-mentioned address.

Submission of bids will be on May 19, 2005 on or before 12:00 noon at the OSBAC. Opening of bids will follow at 1:30 p.m. at the same venue. The official time clock shall be the wall clock located at Room 1804 (OSBAC). Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted.

The BAC-ITR shall determine if each prospective bidder is eligible to participate in the bidding by examining the completeness of each prospective bidder's eligibility requirements or statements against a checklist of requirements, using the **non-discretionary "pass/fail"** criteria.

To guarantee the faithful performance by the winning bidder of his/her obligations under the contract prepared in accordance with the bidding documents, he/she shall post a Bid Security in any of the following forms and amount;

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	Php 100,000.00
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2 %)	Php 150,000.00
Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)	Php 250,000.00
Foreign Government Guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)	Php 10,000,000.00

We look forward to your participation in this worthwhile endeavor.

PhilHealth reserves the right to waive any formality on the eligibility requirements of this project. Furthermore, PhilHealth reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) MELINDA C. MERCADO
SVP, Health Insurance Operations Sector and Chairperson, BAC-ITR

(PDI–April 13 & 20, 2005)

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- Must have completed at least two (2) years in college for encoders and controllers and Bachelors degree relevant to the job for Cashier position
- Must have relevant experience and training
- Preferably with eligibility appropriate to the positions

Interested applicants may come personally or send their application, comprehensive curriculum vitae with recent 2x2 photo and Certificate of previous employment and training (if there is any) to **PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION**; HRD, Rm. 1507, 15th Flr. CityState Ctr. Shaw Blvd., Oranbo, Pasig City

Only qualified applicants will be called.

PhilHealth
Your Partner in Health

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Iloilo
Municipality of Ajuy

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: April 20, 2005
Contract ID No.: SP-068-IN-01
World Bank Loan No.: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the Construction of 10 units 2-Classroom School Building for Package 1 and Construction of 10 units 2-Classroom School Building for Package 2. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.
2. The Municipality of Ajuy, Province of Iloilo invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the Construction of 10 units 2-Classroom School Building for Package 1 and Construction of 10 units 2-Classroom School Building for Package 2
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting April 21 from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the General Services Office, Municipality of Ajuy, Iloilo, New Municipal Building upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Three Thousand Five Hundred (Php 3,500.00) or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by bid security of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 250,000.00) for Package 1 and Package 2 in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee in a form specified in the bidding data and shall be delivered to the Office of the BAC Chairman / MPDC, Municipality of Ajuy, Iloilo, New Municipal Building on or before 10:00 AM on May 26, 2005 at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. A pre-bid conference will be held at Ajuy Municipal Session Hall, Ajuy, Iloilo on May 10, 2005 at 10:00 AM.

(Sgd) Engr. NILO HINOJALES
BAC Chairman

(PDI-April 20, 2005)

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QUEZON CITY

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PROVINCIAL

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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax: Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 loc. 6592
www.info.com.ph/~afpmod
pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-Bidding)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Marine Engineering Upgrade of Three (3) Jacinto Class Patrol Vessels (JCPV)** of the Philippine Navy. It has an approved budget of **Three Hundred Fifty Four Million Pesos (Php354,000,000.00)**, chargeable against the AFP Modernization Program CY 2002 funds.

The bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **April 20, 2005** until **May 16, 2005** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program Management Office, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo (CGEA), Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of a registration fee amounting to **Thirty Five Thousand Pesos (Php35,000.00)**, which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference for the first stage bidding is scheduled on **May 3, 2005, 9:00 AM** (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders are encouraged to submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

The Bidder shall be allowed to inspect the three (3) JCPVs at the Cavite Naval Shipyard, Naval Base Cavite, Fort San Felipe, Cavite City upon purchase of bid documents until the deadline of submission of the bids.

Deadline for submission of bids of the 1st stage bidding is on **May 17, 2005 9:00 AM** (local time) and followed immediately by the opening of bids on the same day at the Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

(Original Signed)
VICE ADMIRAL ARISTON V DELOS REYES AFP
Vice Chairman, DND-BAC

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2005)

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estates of the late Lorenzo C. Masilungan and Rosalina C. Masilungan were settled by their heirs on 4 March 2005 through an Extrajudicial Settlement of Estate, Doc. No. 302, Book No. 1, O.R. No. 2840121, Service No. 990, Series of 2005, acknowledged before Vice Consul Ferdinand Philip F. Victoria of the Philippine Consulate General of the Republic of the Philippines in the City of Sydney, NSW, Australia.
(PDI – April 13, 20 & 27, 2005)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of Rovin G. Asperilla who died on Aug. 26, 2000 has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs before Notary Public Hobart T. Cocadiz as per Doc. No. 110 Page No. 23; Book No. 05 Series of 2005 (PDI- April 20, 27 & May 4, 2005)

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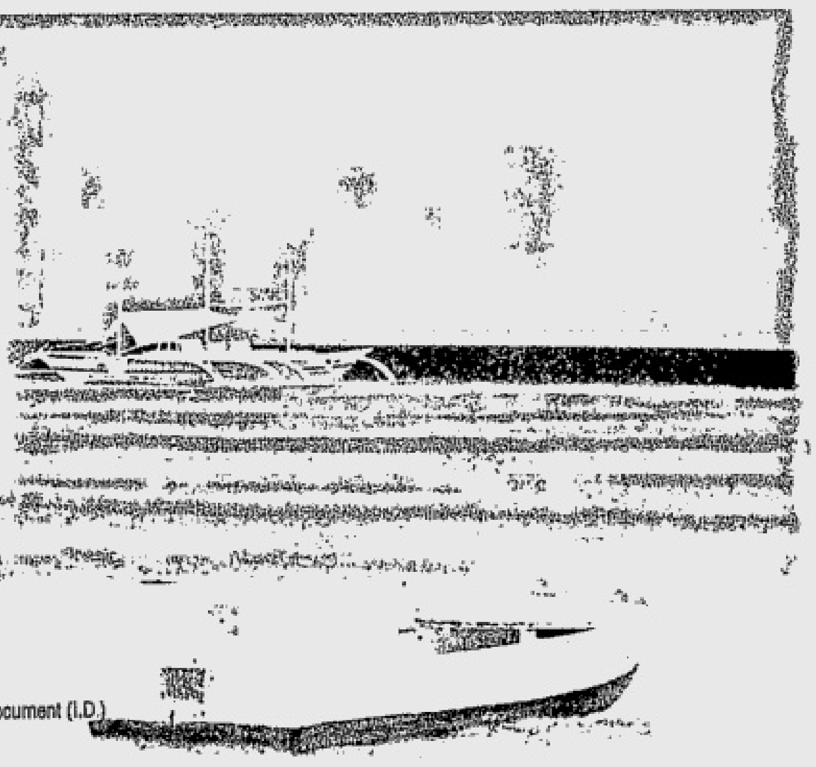

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

SALIM RAVAL AYACHE

who died on April 12, 2005
at the age of 77

wish to convey our most sincere gratitude
to all relatives, friends and fellow workers
for your prayers, sympathy and support,
or in some way expressed your love and concern
during our moment of grief. We request
for your continued prayers and suffrages
for the repose of his soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PD REF NO. PB050406-PP0027
PR NOS. TTSD-05-009202/TTSD-05-009473

The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE FOR HEAD OFFICE**, wishes to invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid on the item listed below:

Quantity	Item Description	PR No.	Approved Budget
	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF:		
1 LOT	SCHEDULE 1: DIGITAL PROTECTION SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT (PSE). 3 SETS; WITH V.35 DIGITAL INTERFACE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING; complete with all necessary interface cables, software and manuals.	TTSD-05-009202	PhP1,500,000.00
1 LOT	SCHEDULE 2: DIGITAL POWER LINE CARRIER WITH INTEGRATED PROTECTION SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT, CABINET, ACCESSORIES, ELEMENT MANAGER TERMINAL AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING; Complete with all necessary interface cables, cabinets, softwares and manuals	TTSD-05-009473	Php10,000,000.00
			Php11,500,000.00

1. Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **April 20, 2005 to May 19, 2005** from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand One Hundred Fifty Pesos (P1,150.00)** per set.
2. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **2:00 P.M. of May 23, 2005** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date is declared non-working day, the new deadline for submission shall be announced through a Bid Bulletin. Submission of documents must be clear, legible and readable. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.
3. Pre-bid conference will be held on **May 10, 2005 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
4. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
5. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the corporation.
6. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – April 20 & 26, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR YELLOW CORN ALLOCATION

The NFA Council has approved the importation of 100,000 metric tons yellow corn. All interested corn users who want to avail of the corn allocation should submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) to the NFA and should be guided by the following:

1. The quality specification is yellow corngrains equivalent to US Grade No. 2 or better.
2. Arrival period is not later than June 2005. Disports are, Manila, Subic, ATI-Mariveles and Batangas.
3. A P0.50/kg service fee shall be charged by the NFA.
4. The cost of the imported yellow corn shall not be less than P10.00/kg, ex- 1st warehouse inclusive of the P0.50/kg service fee.
5. The 100,000 MT yellow corn shall be distributed by allocation to legitimate corn users registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).
6. The volume of allocation per category shall be as follows:

Category	Volume (In MT)
Hog Raisers	30,000
Poultry Raisers	35,000
Feedmillers	35,000

7. All interested corn users shall submit a Letter of Intent which shall include the total volume to be purchased, the preferred disport and the category to which the applicant shall be considered. It must also be supported by a BAI Certification issued by BAI Animal Feeds Standard Division, Diliman, Quezon City as of December 31, 2004 and a copy of the Board Resolution authorizing the individual to transact business for and in behalf of the company. All requests that do not contain the above requirements shall be rejected.
8. LOIs may also be submitted to the nearest NFA branch office by the interested corn buyers. The LOI must be received by the NFA branch office within the stated period and indicate the date and time it was received. Copies of the LOIs from the province may be faxed by the NFA branch office to the Marketing Operations Department.
9. The maximum volume to be allocated to the corn user shall be based on their three (3) months corn consumption requirements as reflected in the BAI certification.
10. Corn users shall be given a period of five (5) working days within which to submit their Letters of Intent after the last day of publication starting April 21-27, 2005.
11. A Commitment Fee/Performance Bond equivalent to P1.00/kg of the total volume allocated shall be paid by the corn user within three (3) days from the issuance of the Notice of Allocation. Payment shall be in Cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check at NFA Central Office, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City.
12. Full payment of the corn allocated to the buyers plus the P0.50/kg service fee shall be undertaken within three (3) days upon issuance of the Notice of Payment. The Notice of Payment shall reflect the final selling price of NFA. If the country of origin of the corn is ASEAN/ASIAN, the Notice of Payment shall be issued upon NFA's receipt of the notice of completion of vessel loading. If the corn is from other sources other than ASEAN/ASIAN countries, the Notice of Payment shall be issued upon receipt of the shipping documents by the NFA.
13. The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all offers, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such offers which in its judgement are most reasonable and advantageous to the Government.
14. For further details you may secure a copy of the General Guidelines on the Importation and Disposition of Yellow Corngrains at the Marketing Operations Department, 5th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City or may call at Tel Nos. 712-1572; 712-1928; 711-7433; 712-3341 to 54 loc. 8514 and 8515.

(Sgd.) **GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.**
Administrator

(PDI–April 20 & 21, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on May 03, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila, among all interested corn suppliers for the supply of maximum 100,000 MT yellow corngrain equivalent to US Grade # 2 or better omnibus origin, in bags or in bulk, for NLT 30 June 2005 arrival with an appropriated budget from corporate resources of Php 1.3 B.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations in US$/MT, CFR, FO for all specifications on the basis of Documents against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of fifteen (15) days from receipt by NFA of the complete set of original documents required for payment.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT. Vessels to be utilized should have a minimum load capacity of 10,000 MT for bagged corngrain cargo. Maximum load capacity of vessel shall be 50,000 MT for bulk yellow corngrain cargo.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instructions to Bidders may be secured starting **13 April 2005** thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Chief III, Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.

The terms of reference and offer sheets will be available from **April 13 to 29, 2005** (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The **pre-bidding conference** will be held on **April 20, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of bids will be on May 03, 2005 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila. Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **JESSUP P. NAVARRO**
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI--April 13 & 20, 2005)

WELCOME
MEMBERS & GUESTS TO OUR
1st General Membership
REBAP

Rebap holds 1st general membership meeting

The Real Estae Brokers Association of the Philippines (Rebap) held its First General membership meeting at the Makati Sports Cluc last March 30. National Directors Vangie Yia, Louie Gonzales, Rene Jularbal, Annie Mojica, Eden dela Cruz, immediate past president Lito Nebre, national director Freddie Gonzales, chairman of the board Danny Santos, guest of honor Mr. Samie Lim VP-Philippine Chamber of Commerce national president Cherith Domingo, national director Au Punzalan, vice president for internal affairs Emily Duterte and national treasure Noel Cobangbang. Standing in the podium leading the invocation is CRB Nida Santos, President Rizal Chapter. REBAP National President Ms. Cherith Domingo delivering her presidents report during the First General Membership Meeting at the Makati Sports Club.

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Republic of the Philippines
SUPREME COURT
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court invites interested canteen concessionaire to submit quotations/proposals for the operation of Canteen located at the Multi-Purpose Building, Supreme Court Compound, Padre Faura Street, Manila that will provide canteen services to 2,500 employees more or less.

Interested concessionaires may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, Supreme Court, after payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand (P1,000.00) pesos. For additional information, contact the Secretary, Atty. Ennar Cabanilla at Telefax 5251270 or Norma Josue at Telefax 5266401.

Interested bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or COB Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference shall be on **27 April 2005**, 2:00 p.m. at the Old Session Hall, 3rd floor, Old Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila.

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative on **4 May 2005**, 2:00 p.m. at the Old Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building, Supreme Court.

III. OPENING OF BIDS

Bids of eligible bidders will be accepted and opened in the presence of the bidders or their representative on **11 May 2005**, at 10:00 a.m. at Old Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building, Supreme Court.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all quotations and/or offers submitted, waives any defects or informalities therein, or accepts any quotation or offer which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

JOSE P. PEREZ
Chairman

13 April 2005.

By:

(Sgd.) **FELIPA B. ANAMA**
Vice-Chairperson
Committee on Bids

(PDI–April 14 & 20, 2005)

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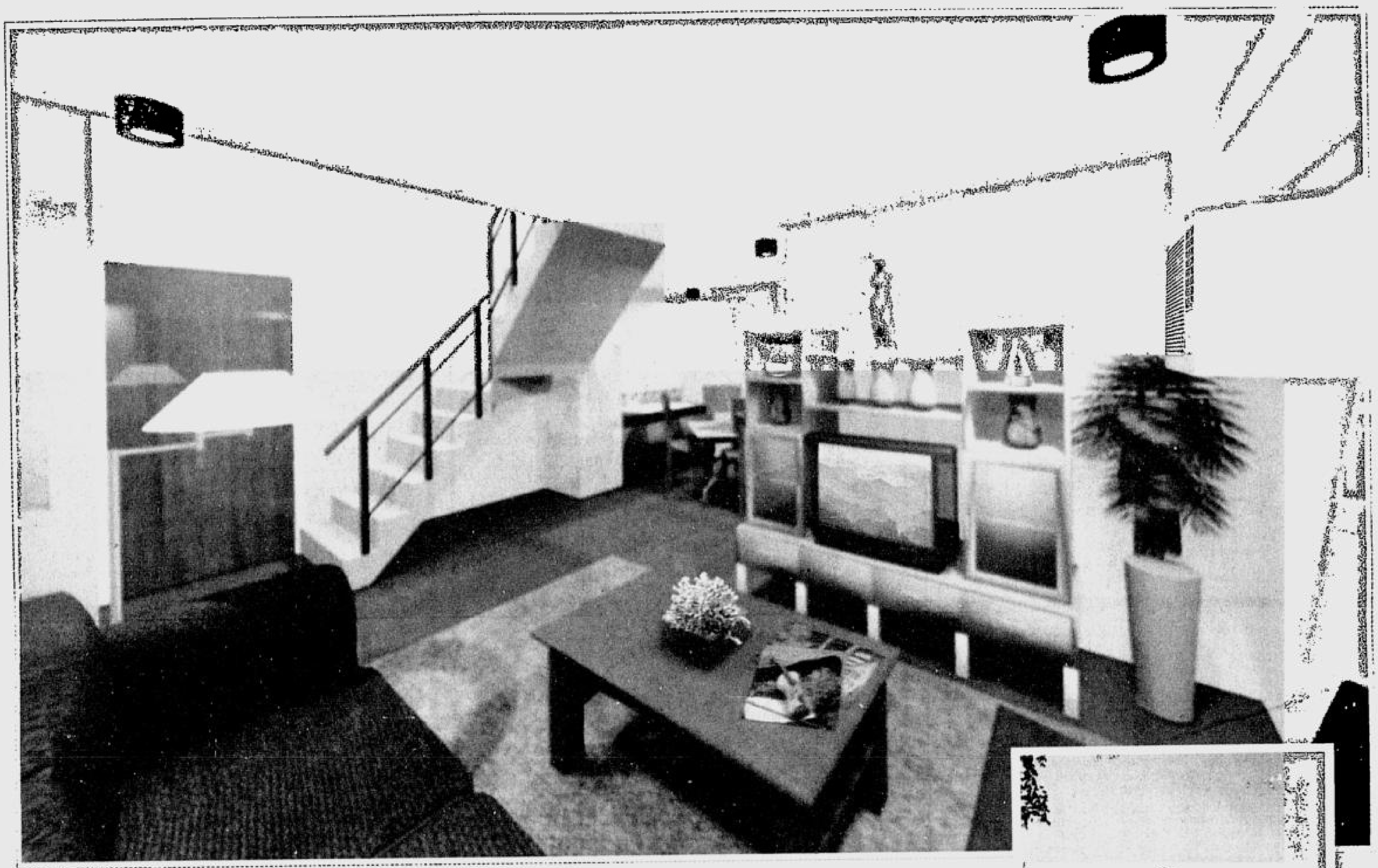

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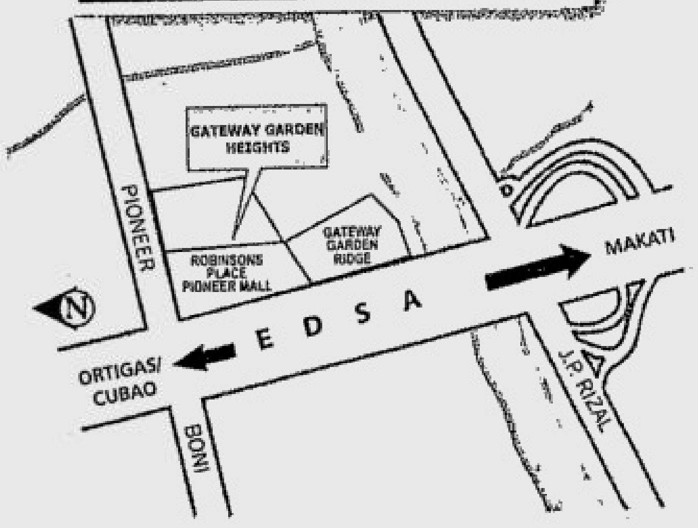

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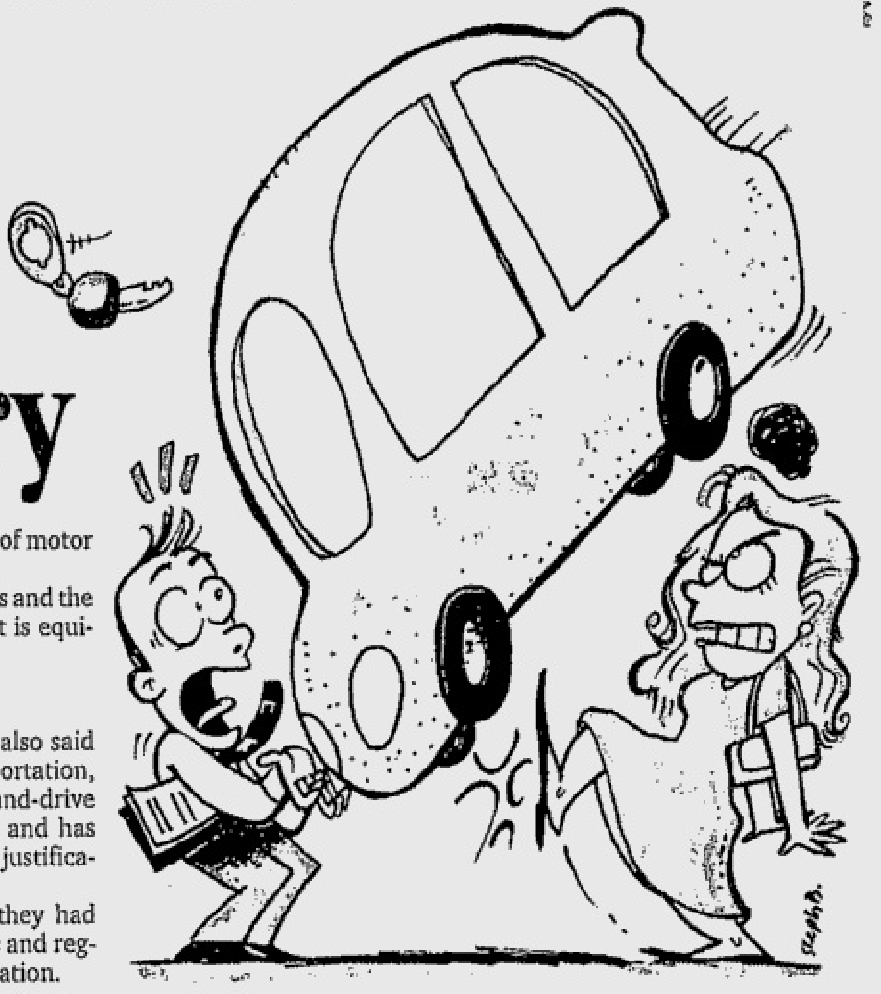
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Yes to lemon law; no to imported used cars—auto industry



By Tessa R. Salazar

THE LEMON Law and imported used cars—two seemingly unrelated topics—continue to hound the local auto industry.

These issues have recently united four automotive groups to issue supporting statements.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi), the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Automotive Association and the Automotive Industry Workers Alliance (Aiwa) lauded the proposed lemon law and lashed at the continuing proliferation of imported used vehicles, in statements made during a press conference attended by motoring writers and Board of Investments reporters.

Handling complaints

Pertaining to several pending bills related to the creation of a lemon law in the country, officials of the four organizations stressed that it was important to clearly define by law the parameters in handling consumer complaints involving motor vehicles.

They stressed that the proposed legislation should strike a reasonable balance between the rights of the buyer and the seller of motor vehicles.

They also said they hoped Congress and the Senate would craft a lemon law that is equitable, realistic and executable.

Justified

In another statement, the groups also said the prohibition of used vehicle importation, including the prohibition of right hand-drive vehicles, has sufficient basis in law and has reasonable social and economic justifications.

The groups said that for years, they had been advocating for all existing laws and regulations pertaining to vehicle importation.

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CHRYSLER Town & Country

By Tessa R. Salazar

WHEN IT rains, it pours (though many Filipino motorists would wish that it rained gas and diesel this summer).

A strikingly upbeat automotive beat has seen a deluge of cars from foreign carmakers into the Philippines within a span of one week. More surprising is that all these activities are happening amid continuing fuel price increases.

On the offensive

For CATS Motors Inc., it would be the best time to be on the offensive as it makes it clear that it intends to put one of Detroit's vaunted "Big Three" in the Philippine automotive map, two months after DaimlerChrysler AG appointed CATS Motors as its distributor for its Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge lines. CATS has been appointed in charge of all aspects of automotive sales and after-sales of selected DaimlerChrysler brands and products.

Filipino motoring writers who got to try the Chrysler 300C (valued at P2.550 million) swear that though it was a full-sized American body, it didn't feel completely "boaty." For its size, the nimble suspension and precise handling of the 300C—while maintaining a comfortable ride of a luxury car—was worth noting. The chassis, they noted, hinted of German workmanship.

Heaped with praises, including Motor Trend's remark as the "rejuvenation of the great American full-size sedan," the 300C is replete with technology, including electronic stability program, all-speed traction control, antilock brake system, four-wheel disc brakes, short and long-arm front suspension and five-link independent rear suspension systems.

Introductions

First introduced to the country is Chrysler 300C's 3.5-liter V6 with four-speed transmission variant. This will be followed by the 5.7-liter Hemi V-8 with five-speed transmission with Autostick. Spec sheets show the Hemi V-8 sports 340 hp and 390 lb ft of torque, and goes from 0 to 60 miles per hour (96 kph) in 6.3 seconds. It sports a rear wheel drive system that its makers say would give it several advantages in the large car market.

CATS also flaunts its bet in the SUV lineup, the 2005 Dodge Durango (priced at P2.450 million), saying that the model breaks away from a conformist crowd or "me too" designs. It has three power trains: the standard V6, the 4.7-liter V8 and the new 5.7-liter Hemi Magnum V8.

DURANGO

CHRYSLER 300C

CATS has also brought in the 2005 Chrysler Town & Country mini van (at P2.150 million). Featuring the Stow 'n Go feature, the 2005 Town & Country has up to 256 seating configurations. For those sensitive to noise pollution, hear this: Chrysler claims it invested $40 million in order to make the "quietest mini van" even quieter. Its interior has been measured to be over 16 percent quieter now.

More car models

From the Korean front, it looks like there's no stopping Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari), Hyundai's exclusive distributor in the country, from bringing in more car models. After introducing the Starex with CRDI (common rail direct injection), it has recently shipped in a V6 sedan, an SUV and a hatchback.

The 3.3-liter V6 NF Sonata, priced at P1.430 million, features a 5-speed automatic transmission generating 235 ps/6,000 rpm with max torque of 31 kg-m/3,500 rpm.

Hari also brings in the Tucson, a full-time 4-wheel-drive SUV. The specs sheet says its powerplant is a 2-liter CRDI, its suspension system an independent, McPherson strut with coil springs in front and independent strut with multilinks and coil springs in the rear. Hari says both front and rear have hydraulic shock absorbers with antiroll bars. It is equipped with ABS with rear disc brakes, and traction control system.

For drivers feeling the pinch of fuel prices, the 1.1- and 1.3-liter Getz super mini M/T is available for P419,000 while the 1.3-liter A/T is priced at P549,000.

The Hyundai Matrix MPV now has a diesel variant with the CRDI engine. The 1.5-liter M/T variant claims a fuel mileage of 21.69 km to the liter. A Car Awards Group Inc. representative got a result of 25.1 km/liter in minimal traffic.

Another launch

Not to be outdone, the "ultimate driving machine" BMW recently launched its new 3 Series to complement the One Series.

The 3 Series has the all-new line of four- and six-cylinder engines. It has several variants, the price of which starts at P2.3 million.

Getting really loud in Cebu

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

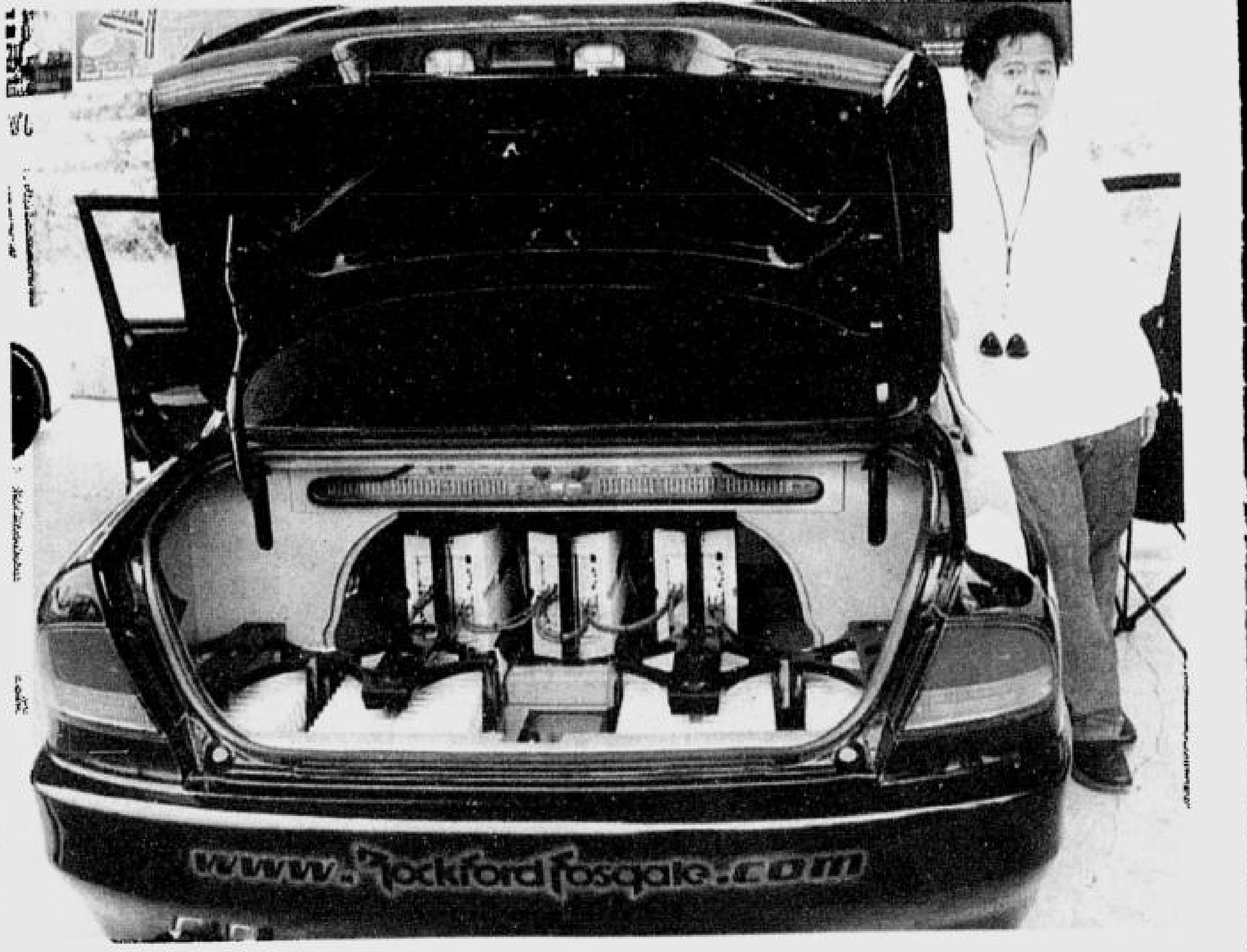
WHEN MAX Ty was in his 20s and received his first set of car keys, the first thing he did was to drop by a local car audio store and bought a modest sized "boom-box" for his Toyota Corolla.

But it was not until seven years later when he decided to bring this passion to the next level when he entered his vehicle—this time a Honda CR-V—to a car audio system competition.

"Ever since, I had dreamed of owning a car and putting in the biggest, baddest sound system for everyone to hear and appreciate," says the Cebuano businessman, now 32 years old.

Well, his dream is now a reality as Ty is once again declared the winner of the Cebu-wide Summer Sound Off SPL Competition early this month (SPL stands for "Sound Pressure Level" which indicates basically how loud a specific noise is. In this particular competition, the entry that creates the most pressure wins).

NO room for another seat, Ty's entry is built for one purpose—winning the SPL competition.



THE WINNING car with its owner

Winning entry

His winning entry is a 1995 two-liter Mitsubishi Galant equipped with six Rockford Fosgate 1501bd amplifiers, three Rockford Fosgate 1051 S amplifiers, one Rockford Fosgate 851X amplifier, 12 RNP2212 500 Watt RMS power handlers, 14 Lightning Audio capacitors and wiring connectors.

"It took my team six months—and P1.6 million in the process—to install all these equipment in the car," says Ty.

The hardest and probably the most time-consuming part for Ty was figuring out what kind of system he is going after.

"This should be the first issue that needs to be settled—what is your objective in building one. This will dictate what sort of setup or how complicated your audio system will be," says Ty, who after winning for five straight years already, is now setting sights on joining national competition in the near future.

But why spend money on extremely expensive car audio system?

"Most cars aren't designed at the factory to be the best sounding, rattle-free environment out there, and the fact that I spent most of my time in the car while stuck in traffic, I might as well have the best-sounding car audio system accompanying me," Ty reasons out.

PALANCA says the only limiting factor in any car audio setup is the owner's imagination.

More than glad

And his friend Winter Snow marketing assistant GM Bob Palanca is more than glad to help him in his passion.

"Even premier factory-installed sound system doesn't begin to compare to quality after market systems that are available," reveals Palanca, who's company is the exclusive distributor of Rockford Fosgate as well as other big names in car audio products and accessories (JVC Mobile In-Car Entertainment, Kicker, DLS Super Natural Sound, and Shinco).

Palanca explains after-market car audio systems can transform one's car into a really great car, "no matter what model one drives'"

Several to choose from

"There are many after-market car audio systems to choose from and they can bring sound and the level of comfort to your driving experience," says Palanca.

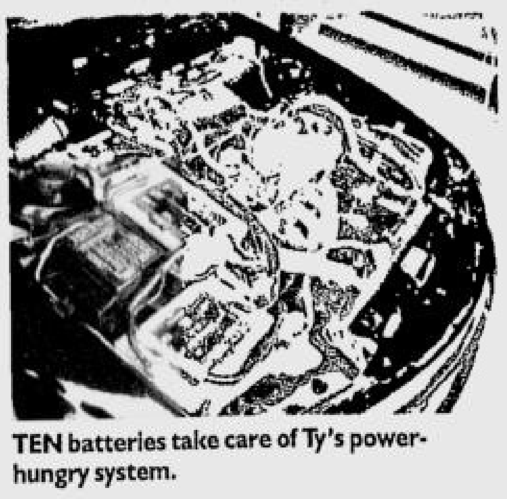
But its different for Ty: while he owns a number of fully equipped vehicles (which he uses for his daily commute), his winning car is absolutely for competition only.

"It's a little heavy because of all the equipment installed (an additional thousand kilograms to the car's weight) and the system eats a lot of electricity, a reason the car has 10 batteries—four in the engine bay and six in the cabin.

Goal

"Our goal is to bring car audio to the larger audience and to support the car audio enthusiast," says Nesty Lim, the head judge of the annual competition hosted by Killer Bee and the Mobile Audio Association of Cebu.

Lim relates that the country's car audio enthusiasts are no longer far from those in the Unites States or elsewhere.

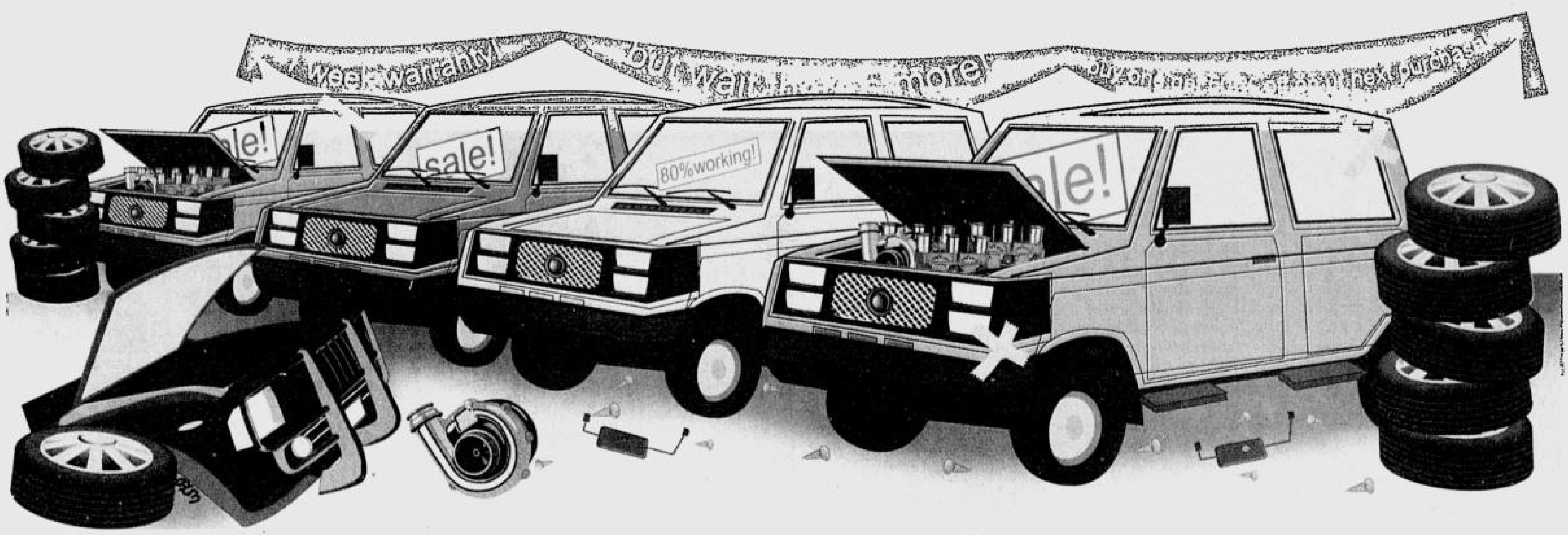


TEN batteries take care of Ty's power-hungry system.

"Just take a look at all the cars competing and compare them to those you see in the Internet," says Lim.

However, he says while the market is growing fast, it is still in its infancy.

Palanca believes this, too. "It will take some more years, but the number of Filipinos who are starting to appreciate what great car audio system should be is growing. Another good news is that today's car audio systems come in all price ranges and make playing music in their car far more exciting than ever before."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The dumping ground of scrap

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

MANY of us are "proud to be Pinoy," but those of us who aren't may soon have another reason to be ashamed: the Philippines is fast becoming the dumping ground of used motor vehicles already considered scrap in Japan, South Korea and other countries. As a result, used car imports not only impede the growth of, but also threaten the Philippine automotive industry. In 2004, out of the 268,075 first-time motor vehicle registrations recorded by the Land Transportation Office, less than half—88,075 to be exact—were new cars. The rest—180,000—were imported used cars.

Of course, you've read about all this before, but did you know that 75,000 people will lose their jobs if the importation of used vehicles is allowed to continue unabated and kill the Philippine automotive industry?

Auto industry workers receive high wages with full benefits and good working conditions. When you consider that each of these 75,000 employees (in the 14 car assembly/distributor firms, 20 commercial vehicle assembly/distributor firms, 256 auto parts manufacturing companies and 240 dealer outlets) is, on the average, the breadwinner of a family of four, their joining the ranks of the jobless means that around 300,000 more persons will go hungry.

Impact

The impact on our economy will be devastating since vehicle and auto parts manufacturers have invested P68 billion in the Philippines. In 2002 alone, the industry paid P11.5 billion in excise tax, VAT and import duties to the government and brought in US$1.9 billion when it exported vehicles and parts that year. Compare that to the "almost" P1 billion that the used motor vehicle importers claim to pay annually in taxes and customs duties and the 6,000 workers that they claim to directly hire.

So the next time you are tempted to buy an imported second-hand vehicle from Subic Freeport for a fraction of its brand-new price, think of what you are doing to your country and to hundreds of thousands of fellow Filipinos who depend on the auto industry for their livelihood.

If that doesn't bother you because you don't care about your country that much, think of your own safety and that of your family. You will be driving a vehicle that has already reached the end of its life span and that was deregistered in its country of origin as no longer roadworthy nor meeting safety and emission standards. In other words, you will be driving scrap.

Converted

Or a rolling coffin, for that matter. The danger is greater if the unit you buy is a "converted" one, as is most likely since most of the imported used vehicles brought in through Subic Freeport are right-hand drive. When a vehicle is designed for right-hand drive, it cannot be converted to left-hand drive through cutting and welding without violating design rules and imperiling driving conditions. Initially, it may seem to work, but problems with steering inevitably crop up with dangerous consequences as, for instance, the vehicle turning left when the driver steers it to the right.

And as pointed out by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi), glaring violations of safety requirements such as the headlight beam patterns, wiper orientation and the position of the door (of passenger vans) expose not only the driver and passengers to extreme danger but also other motorists and pedestrians as well.

But if the safety risks and the impact on our country's economy still won't dissuade you from buying an imported used car, think of the zero resale value of your purchase. A used car that was declared scrap in its country of origin, then dumped in Subic for recycling/conversion and sale to a secondhand buyer has no resale value afterward. No car buyer in his right mind would touch it with a ten-foot pole. So kiss your money goodbye when you pay hundreds of thousands of pesos for that junk heap and, after experiencing problems with it later on, try to resell it.

The law

What's more, when you buy a used import, you are disregarding the law—Executive Order 156 (the Motor Vehicle Development Program) bans the importation of used vehicles while Republic Act 8506 bans the importation of right-hand drive vehicles. Not only do converted right-hand drive vehicles violate safety requirements, they also fail to meet the emission standards of the Clean Air Law and thereby worsen the air pollution level here that is already one of the highest in the world.

Used car importers contend that they are doing a public service by selling vehicles that Juan de la Cruz can afford. They conveniently overlook the safety issue and the existence of a big secondhand car market offering locally sourced pre-owned vehicles at affordable prices, with some brands and models certified by their distributors. Besides, many brand-new models are now sold with low down payment and easy financing terms offered by dealers and the auto loan departments of numerous commercial banks.

It's a good thing that Campi, under the leadership of Elizabeth Lee of Universal Motors Corp., has joined hands with the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines, Philippine Automotive Association and Automotive Industry Workers Alliance to overcome the threat to the industry. At a media forum last week, Ms Lee noted that after suffering a setback when the Court of Appeals issued an injunction on EO 156, the government has been doing its share with Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina's memo to strictly implement the ban on the entry of right-hand-drive vehicles and President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's EO imposing a P500,000 specific tax on imported used vehicles. "Let's remember," she said, "that none of our Asean brothers—Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia—allow imports of used vehicles and for good reason. This in turn has helped, to a significant extent, these countries' large, healthy auto industries."

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A woman's place is in the House... and the Senate!

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

Trans Sport Show 2005 opens today

TRANS Sport Show 2005, the country's premier and also the oldest running and largest publicly attended annual motoring event, will formally open its doors to the public today at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City.

Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales, Mandaluyong Rep. Benhur Abalos and top Formula 3 drivers Pepon Marave and Tyson Sy will lead guests to the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The show will open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. until April 24.

The Filipino's love affair with the automobile is quite legendary and the organizers, TradeShow International Inc. (TSI), believe that with the success goes the responsibility to continuously educate and entertain its loyal followers and likewise the new breed of car enthusiasts with an informative and excitement filled motoring event.

Entries

As always, the main highlight of the show is the Trans Sport Show Cup Open Class Car Competition. More than 50 of the best-restored classic and contemporary cars will vie for the prestigious "Best of Show" award.

TSI president and CEO Sophie delos Santos said, "We have always been overwhelmed by the number of cars being entered every year and as much as possible, we try to balance the number of entries per category—from vintage to classic to contemporary automobiles."

Notable entries for this year are the 1967 Mercedes-Benz 300 Adenauer of Alexander Wongchuking; 1968 Corvette Stingray of American muscle car collector Tony Feliciano; 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible of Vidal Ledda; 1966 Pontiac GTO of Xtreme Autocenter; 1972 Datsun 240Z of Michael Pineda and the 1971 BMW 3.0CS of Mel Felix.

Other attractions

For the car racing enthusiast, the Manila Sports Car Club will put on display a replica of the classic 1965 Lola T-70 Mark 3 Cam-Am race car. The mid-engine car is powered by a 350 cubic inch Chevrolet HO V-8 engine mated to a Renault T30 5-speed transmission. The Lola T-70 had raced successfully in the Canadian-American Challenge Cup against such formidable opponents like the McLaren M8s, Ferrari P330, Chaparral 2-E and Porsche 908s.

This year will also have Porsche and Audi as the featured automobiles during the five-day event. To be set up by the Manila Sports Car Club is a special display of Porsche cars: a 1998 Porsche GT-2, 1979 Porsche Carrera SC and 1965 Porsche 911S. The Audi Owners Club will display an Audi TT coupé and an Audi A4.

Another event highlight that is gaining much popularity is the search for Ms Trans Sport Show. Now on its 6th year, the search is open to all promotional girls employed by the different corporate exhibitors for the event. Apart from being good-looking, the criteria for judging also include the level of knowledge of the contestant about the product she is promoting and the manner with which she carries herself while endorsing the product to the show visitors.

New products

Ambi Pur, the show's presenter, will come out with its new air diffuser, scent bottle and external packaging. Halden Galway will present the Microtex Ultimate Cleaning Cloth made from ultra fine threads called microfibers, a special blend of polyester and nylon that has unparalleled absorbing, cleaning, dusting, buffing and polishing qualities.

Tyremart will present the Dunlop Direzza DZ101 high-performance tires, a new generation tire compatible with superior sports performance and excellent ride for all sports driving enthusiasts. Maxx Energie Ventures will showcase the Rocket Heavy Duty Automotive Battery; PIE Auxillary Audio Switches and the Car Vio Mobile Entertainment System with DVD, VCD, CD, MP3 and JPEG features. Total (Philippines) Corp. will showcase its latest high-performance engine oil, the Total Quartz and the Elf Excellium.

Sponsors

The show is presented by Ambi Pur Car Freshener with Caltex Havoline as platinum sponsor, Sony Xplod and William Parts as gold sponsor and Puerto del Sol as minor sponsor.

Media sponsors are 105.1 Crossover, Jam 88.3, 103.5 K-lIte, Magic 89.9, RT 99.5, Wave 89.1, Digital Resources Corp., PhilOnline, Yehey.com, BCS Systems & Technology Inc., Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, Business World, Philippine Star, Peso Saver, Discover Philippines, Skystar, Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp. and Café Puro.

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JOURNEYS begin with small, sometimes inaudible steps. The physical act of moving forward is initiated by overcoming inertia and traveling that first humble millimeter toward one's destination. Only in this way can we begin to travel great distances and head for objectives unparalleled.

The year 2005, just barely out of its first quarter, is already one for the Philippine automotive history books. We are now able to join the rest of the motoring communities of the world with our own Car of the Year (Coty)—something that should have been done a long time ago. This exercise in choice and professionalism by the majority of the motoring media can be labeled as the moment that we, as a motoring society, began to move out of the automotive dark ages.

Moving forward

Let's face it, few Philippine industries have, in any tangible fashion, recovered from the economic crash of 1997, and this has in many ways affected the Filipino motorist, our car culture and the local automotive industry. Coty cannot pretend to be the solution to the issues, both economic and political, that plague our car culture. It does nothing else but show motorists, media and manufacturers alike that we all must begin to move forward and do so in a manner displaying vocational integrity.

Another groundbreaking event that has the potential to uplift Philippine motoring and keep us moving forward, is the pioneering Manila Motorshow. The concept of the Manila Motorshow (MMS) is different because it aims to be the first industry-wide tradeshow, encompassing all facets of Philippine motoring. Looking to other pioneering auto trade shows abroad, like the ones in Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, the Manila version seeks to be a venue to showcase the vehicles, products and services that comprise our local automotive industry. The exhibition will hopefully allow consumers to gauge what products they need and want in an all-encompassing and information-rich environment.

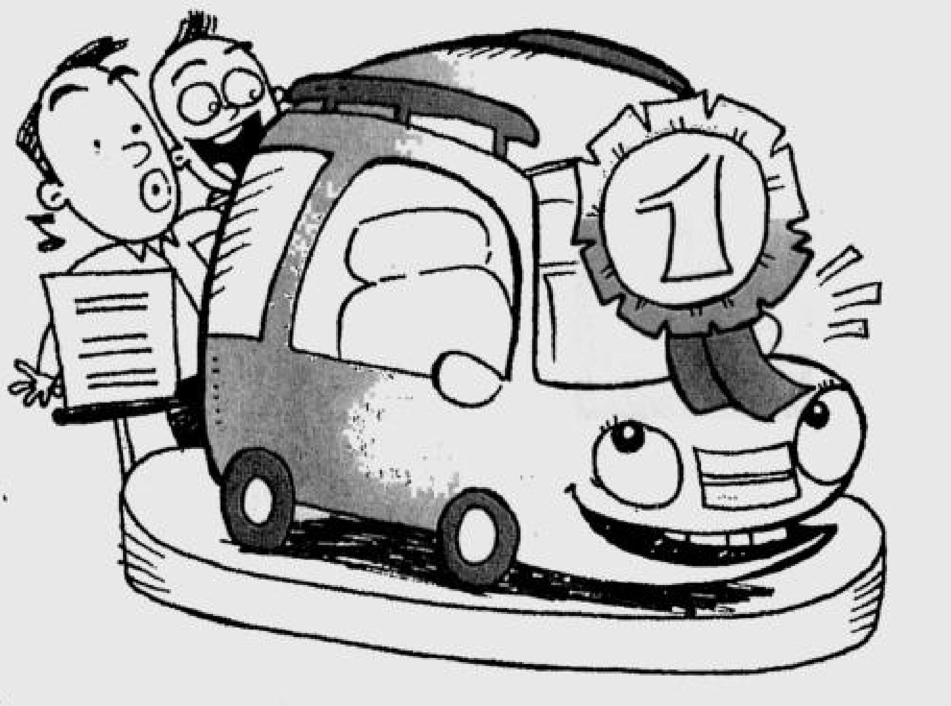
RP car shows

But what of the plethora of Philippine "car shows" that already dot the yearly calendar of every enthusiast; are these now obsolete and of no use? Not at all, these serve their own important purpose and do well to keep us updated on what's new and what's hot in the car modification world. These car shows, heavily supported by the aftermarket parts companies and tuning shops, are well established and recognized. With their unique mix of the beauty pageant and bazaar concepts, these will remain popular with the masses of Filipino motorists.

Even in the first world markets, there exists a dual polarity in the motorshow schedule. In the automotive-mad Japanese home market, the vehicle manufacturers and their suppliers have their Tokyo Motorshow (TMS) to showcase their newest releases, while the aftermarket yakuza rule the roost of the over-the-top Tokyo Auto Saloon (TAS). In the United States, the Las Vegas hosted Specialty Equipment Manufacturer's Association (Sema) is hot-rod and custom-car heaven, while several motorshows, like Detroit and New York in particular, focus on the big brands, their fresh models and innovative concept cars. Not only is there room for both kinds of shows in a single motoring culture, they must co-exist to allow it to flourish. In the Philippine context, MMS will do the job of manufacturer and OEM showcase while the other shows can offer the spectacle and showmanship of the aftermarket.

To increase sales

The purpose, in all brutal honesty, of all trade shows is to increase sales of the featured products. There is no hiding this aim. The main factor that will decide the success of the MMS will be an increase in the volume of business turned over by the Philippine automotive industry in general. If the event is a triumph, the benefits will not only bring economic uplift, as more business will automatically spell more jobs and more revenues around, particularly for a tax-frenzied and cash-strapped Philippine government.



Success of the MMS will also signal a maturing of the market. By disseminating product information, the Philippine motorist will hopefully be more educated and discerning. This will mean that the manufacturers will have to make sure that their wares will meet the needs and expectations of a "tougher" audience. This can only be done with impeccable vehicles, excellent products and value-laden services. Our participation in this event is therefore key, as we, a motoring society, are the ultimate beneficiaries of this endeavor.

The Manila Motorshow will be held at the World Trade Center in Pasay City from April 28 to 30.

It's the season of sun, sea and 'sin' sip

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE MONTH of April is really the start of fun during summer. Almost every family has an outing or two just to cool if off somewhere, anywhere if need be.

Thus, in keeping with tradition, Toyota and Honda have lined up trips inviting motoring journalists to adventures that would accentuate the joy of summer.

I'm sure that because of the soundness of the project, the other big names in the industry would follow suit soon.

* * *

In the Honda bash set for April 18-20 is an adventure drive for our motoring writers going up North (treasure hunt?), via the scenic coastal towns of Lingayen and Binmaley in Pangasinan. With Arnel Doria and TinTin Reyes in command, everything would all be under control. Arnel, who is from Binmaley, should make it more than comfortable for the group to reach his turf. Memorable even, especially if Arnel would let his guests savor Binmaley's best-kept secret: Malaga and bangus. They are Pangasinan's culinary pride that not having a bite of them would be a mortal sin when one is in Pangasinan, especially in Binmaley.

I'm almost sure Arnel will see to that.

For Toyota, the journey's final destination in the April 20-22 trip is that fun capital of summer: Boracay.

Starting off in Iloilo (or is it Roxas City?), Ariel de Jesus, that incomparable "follow the leader" exponent of Toyota Motor Philippines under the tutelage of Danny "Sir John" Isla, would haul off the entourage to Caticlan en route to Boracay via a short but thrilling boat ride. For two days, the journalists will be treated to a driving adventure on board Toyota's brand-new IMVs (Innovative Multipurpose Vehicles) like Innova, Hi-Ace, Hi-Lux and RAV4. The third day will literally be all sun, sea and sight in Boracay. Oh, well, don't discount the seafood, "sin" drink and all. With Ariel de Jesus around, nothing's impossible.

Almost very often, when car companies give special attention to motoring journalists, they are not only building goodwill but also a tremendous effort to maintaining a solid bridge that will connect them to frontiers well beyond their expectations. The dividends have always been quite un-quantifiable and I can only wish Honda and Toyota—and to my colleagues—all the best.

Have fun, dolls and guys! And don't forget to have that tan or you haven't been to the beach at all.

For once, be a son of a beach?

* * *

I am delighted to know that Volvo is throwing millions of dollars anew as it prepares to sponsor The Volvo Ocean Race, the world's biggest sea race.

In a projected reprise of The Volvo Ocean Race in 2001-2002, the 2005-2006 edition promises to surpass the 800 million viewers of the 2001-02 yachting competition, making it one of the top international sporting competitions that season.

This year, the Volvo race will showcase a Pirates of the Caribbean II entry in the thrilling round-the-world race after the Walt Disney Co. and Volvo (Volvo Car Corp. and AB Volvo) have entered into a unique film marketing deal for "Pirates of the Caribbean II." The agreement will include the creation of a competitive entry in the 31,250-nm adventure, considered the world's premier ocean race.

The announcement of the Pirates' boat ensured a high-profile US presence among the fleet for the eight-month epic. Repeat: eight-month epic.

Glenn Bourke, the Volvo Ocean Race CEO, said: "The excitement and intrigue that this entry brings to the race takes us to a whole new level in terms of global profile and exposure. To link up with a Hollywood icon such as the Walt Disney Co. is a fillip for the event and for sailing in general. The deal also underscores the value of the Volvo Ocean Race as a compelling marketing communications tool in the eyes of the commercial world. In terms of competition, I fully expect this team, proudly flying the flag of the United States, will be at the sharp end of the race for honors."

"Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and directed by Gore Verbinski, once again stars Johnny Depp as Captain Jack Sparrow, Orlando Bloom as Will Turner and Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Swann. "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," the spectacular follow-up to the international blockbuster released in 2003, is currently being filmed in Los Angeles and the Caribbean and is due for release in July 2006.

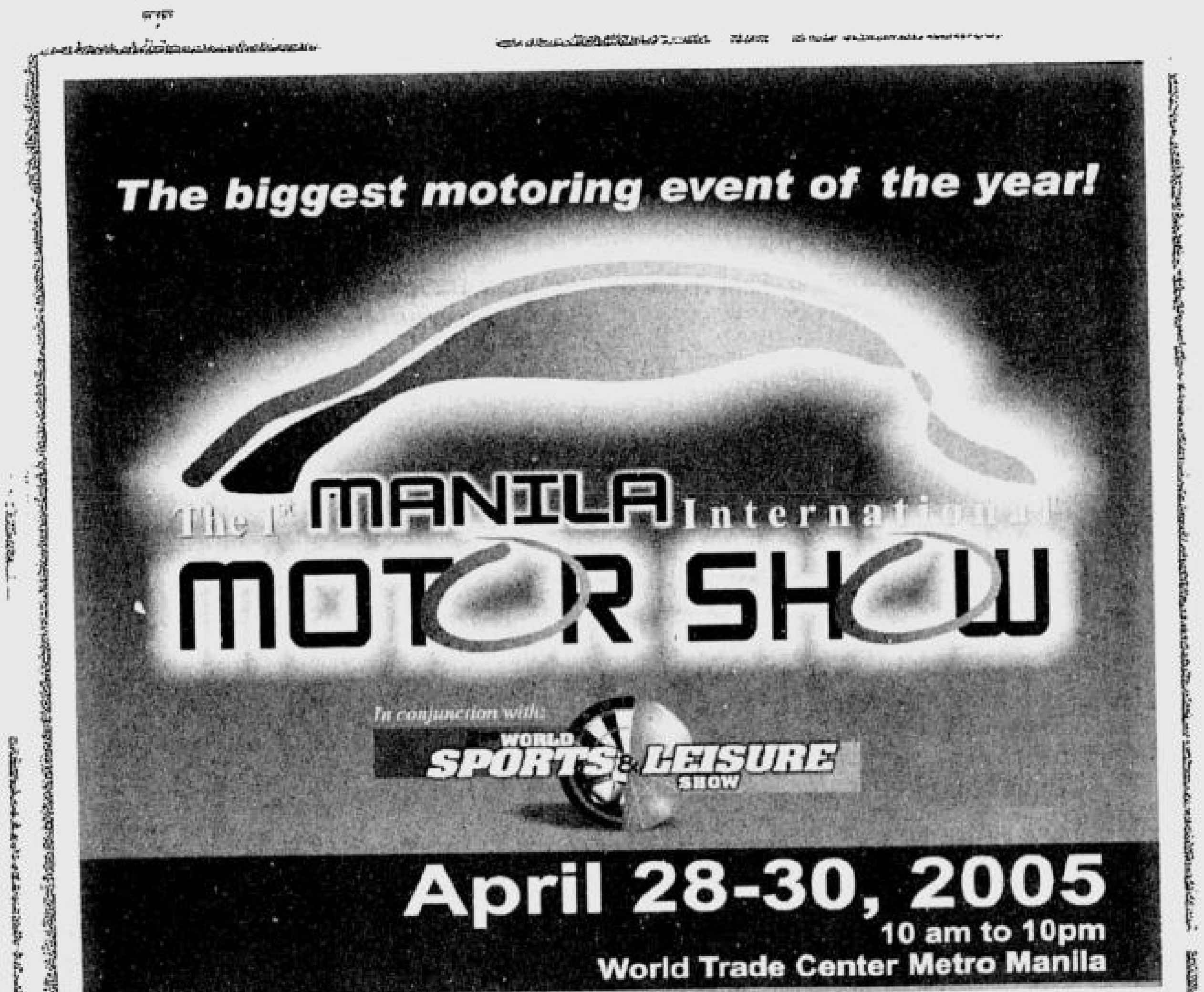
I am a film buff, too, and I tell you I won't miss this—even if the wait takes forever.

* * *

NLEX NOTES: It is without doubt that the new 85-km Northern Luzon Expressway has brought a tremendous amount of relief to travelers using it: Smooth road from start to end. But again my suggestion: At this stage, drivers going beyond 100 kph shouldn't be apprehended. Instead, there should be a monitoring system of how many motorists are going beyond 100 kph every day for future reference in case NLEX officials suddenly decide to make the speed limit 120 kph. Or even a survey maybe to ask motorists if they prefer 120 kph over the 100 kph limit. To me, with such a world-class highway, I'd go for 120 kph.

* * *

QUOTE ME: Tires are your immediate connection to the road. Have them checked each time you drive long distance.



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Valvoline supreme synthetics

TO ALLAY some confusions which might have arisen from previously published omnibus-type product information dissemination materials, here again is the low-down on Valvoline's supreme performance lubricants—but with focus on the synthetic lines, this time:

DuraBlend is a synthetic blend motor oil formulated for the toughest conditions. With superior resistance to oil burn-off at high temperatures, DuraBlend provides better protection for severe service like in-town driving or stop-and-go driving.

Helping offset engine aging

MaxLife is also a synthetic blend, but unique in that it has been designed from start, specially for higher mileage engines. Motor vehicles with engines over 75,000 miles (about 100,000 km) will benefit the most from extra ingredients that help offset engine aging. Safe to use even in brand-new engines and will not void engine warranties, MaxLife has seal-renewing properties that help prevent oil leaks. It also reduces deposit formation which makes for a smoother engine run.

Synpower is Valvoline's fully synthetic motor oil. Designed for the ultimate performance, it features an outstanding oil consistency under intense engine temperatures … providing outstanding engine wear protection.

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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

P99 Dunkin' Donuts Choco Rings

Philippines, here we come!

Summer is the perfect time to pack your bags and travel. But instead of turning to the globe for your next trip, why don't you bring out your Philippine map?

Our country is rich in places that we have yet to discover and explore. This week, 2bU! presents some of our favorite places in the Philippines. Beaches, resorts, historic sites and even restaurants—the list goes on and on. And if you want to tell us about your own favorite local corner, e-mail us at ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Remember, you don't have to cross borders for a great adventure.

Coron Island, Palawan

Why go: To soak up the sun on white-sand beaches and marvel at limestone cliffs without bumping into "unwanted" company bopping to some head-splitting techno music.

What to bring: A swimsuit, a camera, some beer and your closest friends

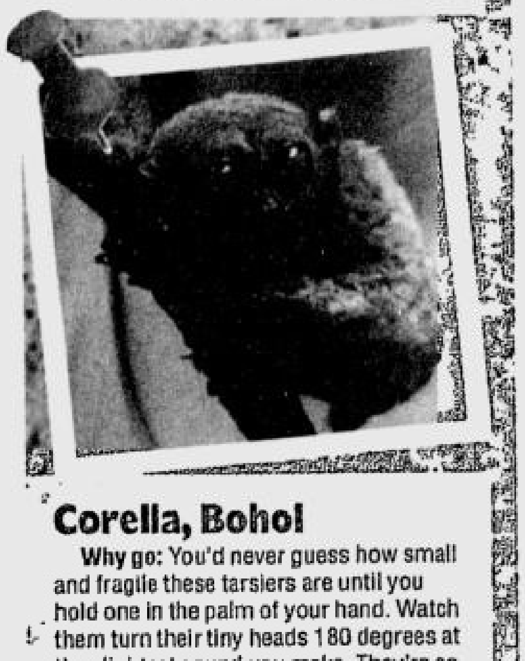
Text and photo by Maui V. Reyes

Villa Escudero, Tiaong, Quezon

Why go: Here's your chance to experience living the life of a Spanish-era *hacendero* at this vast plantation. Enjoy the carabao ride while farm hands regale you with *kundimans*. Eat lunch in the shade of a man-made waterfall while cool clean water flows through your legs. Watch the world-famous cultural show, and afterwards, go rafting in the tranquil river. Cap your day by visiting the museum and checking out its extensive collection of antiques.

What to bring: A hearty appetite for the buffet lunch, a camera and a magnifying glass (to help you discover that an old drawing in the museum is actually made of verses from the Bible)

Text and photo by Gmeleen Tomboc

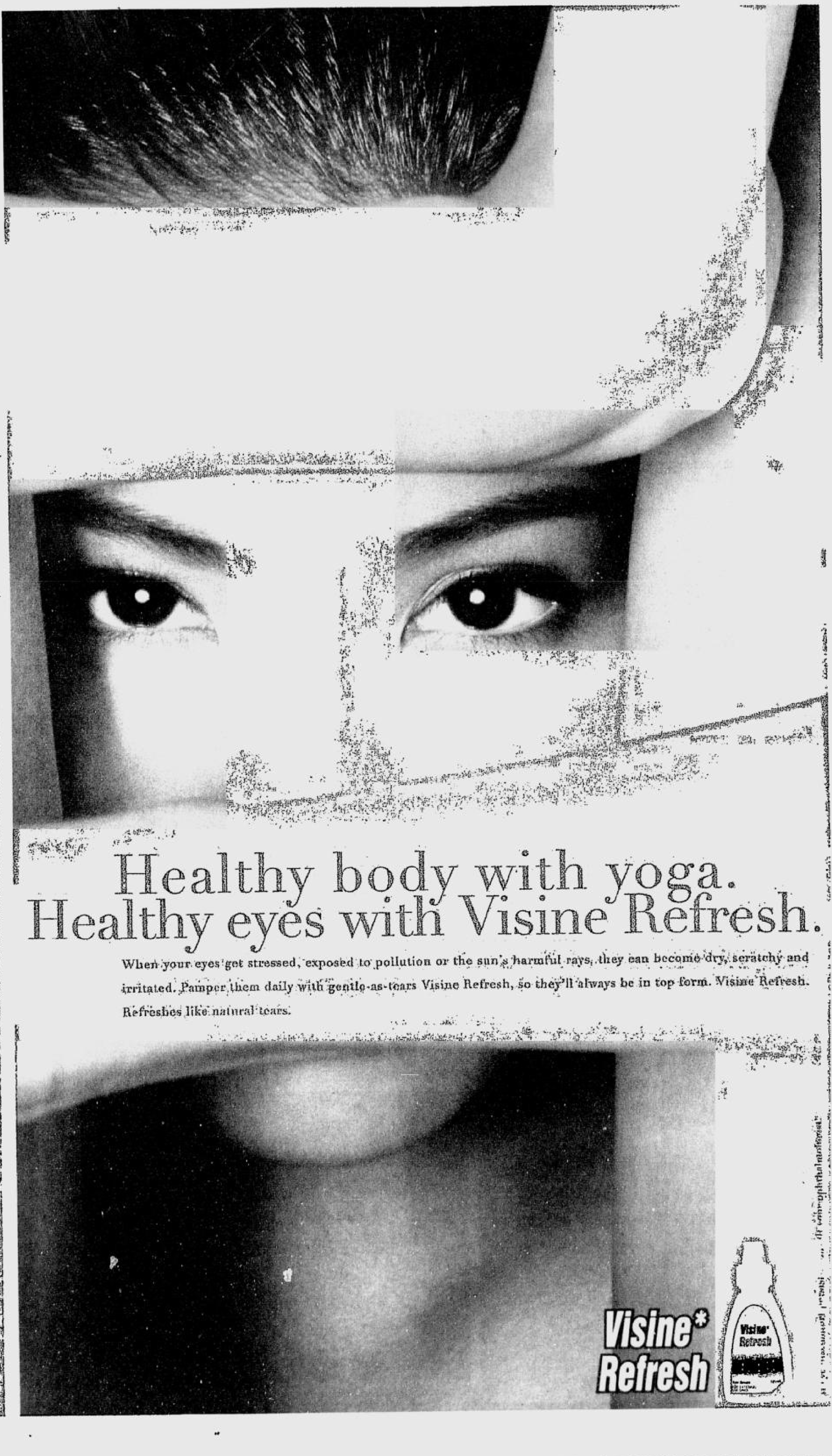


Corella, Bohol

Why go: You'd never guess how small and fragile these tarsiers are until you hold one in the palm of your hand. Watch them turn their tiny heads 180 degrees at the slightest sound you make. They're so cute, you'd want to take one home.

What to bring: A camera. But whatever you do, don't use a flash when taking pictures. These nocturnal creatures don't like being blinded by the light.

Text and photo by Gmeleen Tomboc



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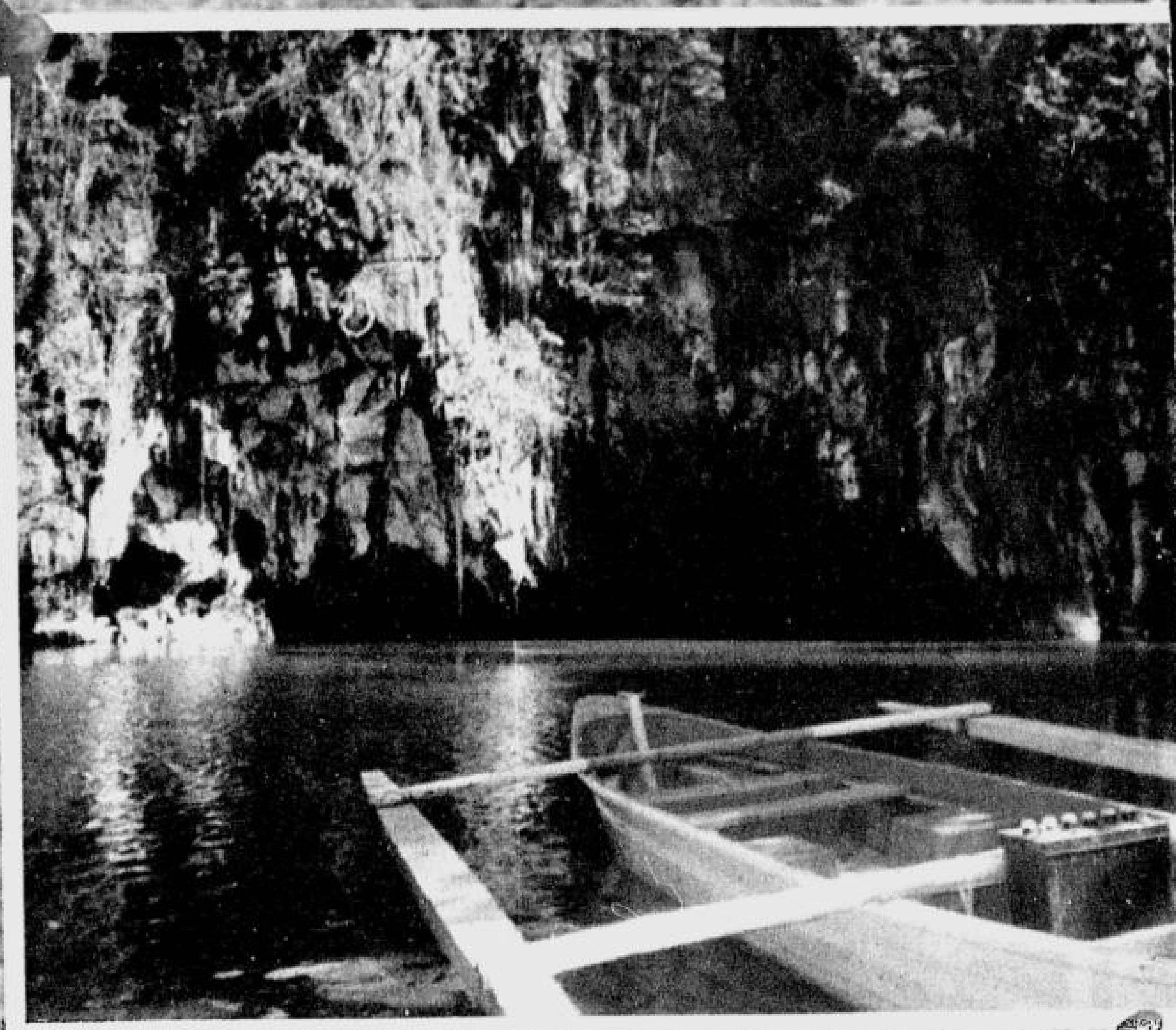
Pamilacan Island, Bohol

Why go: Chat with the boatmen and discover how they were converted from whale hunters to whale protectors. Watch dolphins and whales swim alongside your vessel on the one-hour ride to this secluded beach. Once you get off the boat, a lei of white flowers is placed around your neck while you take in the cool sea breeze. Run your fingers through the powdery white sand before you doze off under a tree. White sand + blue sky + endless sea = Boracay without all the trimmings.

What to bring: Binoculars will enhance your view of the dolphins, especially those that are too shy to go near your boat. Any camera will do, but it's best if you use a high-speed camera. The dolphins jump so quickly in graceful arcs out of the water that they're gone before you can click away.

Text and photo by Gmeleen Tomboc



Underground River at the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan

Why go: The trek to the Underground River Park is a chance to get close to nature and burn those extra pounds. Once inside, the awesome stalactites and stalagmites in various shapes and sizes are sure to make your jaws drop. But keep those mouths closed because the bazillions of bats inside the cave love to pee on visitors.

What to bring: A fan and a bottle of mineral water, and not much else. Since it's a pretty long trek, the less load you have on your back, the better!

Text and photo by Mark Sablan

Summer Place in Boracay (Philippines)

Why go: Located at Station 2, Summer Place has a Mongolian Grill buffet and incredibly potent drinks like Bailey's Shake, which is priced at a bargain.

What to bring: A good stomach, both for the food and the drinks.

Text and photo by Cheryl Tiu

Loboc River, Bohol

Why go: Take a river cruise complete with singing and dancing on board, a la Love Boat. Soak up the familiar scenery, as this was where Panaghoy sa Subá was filmed.

What to bring: Your vocal chords and dancing shoes, above all, so you can join the boat festivities.

Text and photo by Gmeleen Tomboc

Cagayan de Oro River in Cagayan de Oro

Why go: This place is great for white-water rafting. A photo of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo paddling in its rapids has made it a popular destination.

What to bring: The Mambuaya-Kabula course stretches 12.32 km with 14 exhilarating rapids, spanning approximately five hours. At P1,200 per head (P1,400 including lunch), life-vests, helmets and paddles are provided for. Bring sunscreen, swimwear, aqua shoes and a small water-proof bag for valuables.

Text and photos by Cheryl Tiu

Camiguin Island

Why go: The island will sate all your cravings for anything tropical. It has white sands, blue-green seas, waterfalls, hot and cold springs and a lush green forest that's perfect for hiking, minus the commercial establishments. The whole place has a way of hugging you tight, comforting you and making you let go of whatever emotional baggage you're carrying. Don't forget to buy boxes of different flavored pastel bread, the island's specialty, as *pasalubong*.

What to bring: Snorkeling and diving equipment for an underwater experience unlike any other, wide-brimmed hat and SPF lotion because you'll need it, camera, and pen and paper just in case nature inspires you to write poetry.

Text and photo by Ruth L. Navarra

The Agawan Festival at Sariaya, Quezon on May 15

Why go: Like Lucban's Pahiyas Festival, houses are adorned with farm produce and colorful *kipings* during this fiesta. House owners pop out of their windows and toss out fruits, veggies, pastilles, *abaniko*, *buri* hats and even coins to the crowds during the procession.

What to bring: Several rolls of film, an extra memory card and many recharged batteries, and a huge shoulder bag to carry giveaways

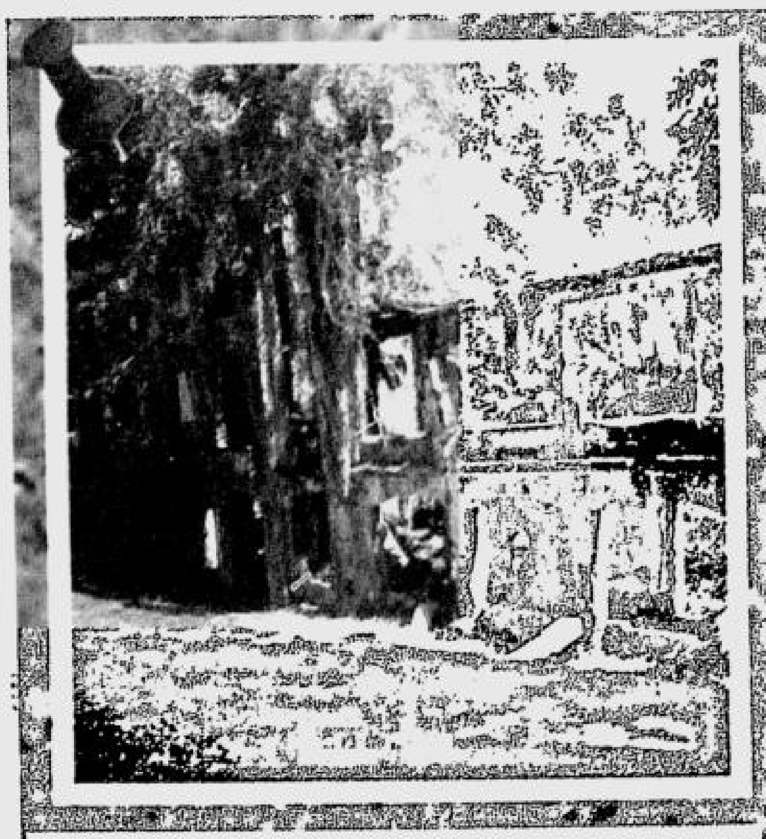
Text and photo by Mark Sablan

Fort Ilocandia Resort Hotel, Ilocos Norte

Why go: Arguably one of the most beautiful and romantic hotels in the Philippines. Complete with swimming pools, recreational facilities, cafés and a cozy spa, this is the place to stay in if you find yourself raring to take a trip up north.

What to bring: Money, insect-repellent lotion and some good ghost stories to share. You're in a centuries-old town, after all.

Text and photo by Angela Ignacio



Corregidor Island

Why go: It only takes one afternoon to experience a whole chapter of Philippine history. For P1,475 (buffet lunch included), Sun Cruises will take you to the island and tour you around aboard a *tranvia*. If you get lucky, a good tour guide just might take you to side trips not included in the itinerary. For another P150, you'd get to enter the Malinta Tunnel for more World War II trivia. If you don't care very much about history, the island's beauty is still perfect for personal reflections and photo opportunities. Visit www.lakbay.net for bookings.

What to bring: Mineral water bottles, SPF lotion, camera and good company.

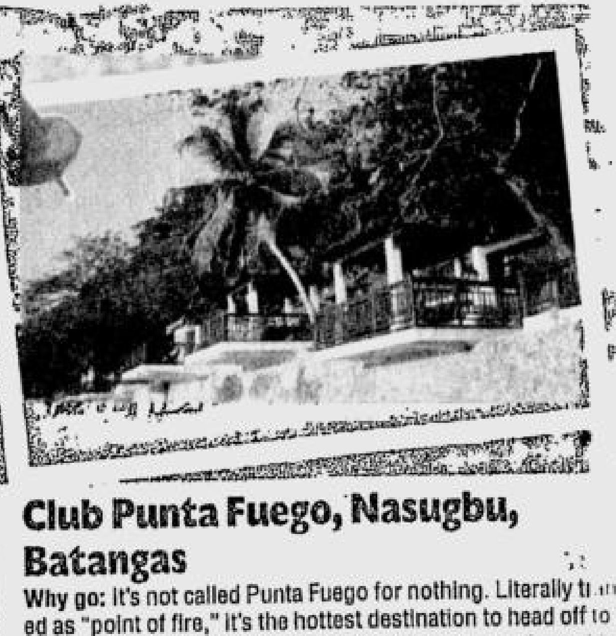
Text and photo by Ruth L. Navarra

Pottery factory/store/restaurant of master potter Ugu Bigyan in Quezon

Why go: With its amazing architecture and interior design, this residence is a veritable museum of several pottery products such as glazed teapots and kettles, oil burners, vases, pitchers, chimes and accessories—all of which you can purchase for *pasalubong*. After the sweat-inducing shopping, let Ugu's staff whip up great grub for you, served on their handmade masterpieces.

What to bring: Lots of cash and a very empty stomach. Beautiful *bayong* bags and boxes are available for free for your purchases.

Text and photo by Mark Sablan



Club Punta Fuego, Nasugbu, Batangas

Why go: It's not called Punta Fuego for nothing. Literally translated as "point of fire," it's the hottest destination to head off to if you're dying to go to the beach but don't want to put up with thick crowds and unbearably long travel time. Its row of gorgeous Mediterranean-style cabanas in the lower beach club (Terrazas) make you feel like you're light years away from the hustle and bustle of the urban jungle. But it's only about two hours away from Manila. If you want to stay longer, check out (or rather, check in at) the upper beach club, where elegant casitas/suites and a great ocean view set the mood for a peaceful, relaxing vacation. Open to members/shareholders.

What to bring: Sunblock, swimsuits, credit cards and your membership card. Visit www.puntafuego.com

Text and photo by Angela Ignacio

Where: Ocean Adventure in Subic Bay

Why go: You can swim and play with false killer whales ("false" meaning they'll let you live). If you don't want to get wet, settle for a photo op with a sea lion. If getting close to sea creatures isn't your thing, just watch a show of dolphins, whales and sea lions. You can also check out their aquariums and learn about Ocean Adventure's conservation programs.

What to bring: Bathing suit, towel, a set of dry clothes and someone who can take your photos while you're swimming with the whales.

Visit www.oceanadventure.com.ph. *Text by Pam Pastor*

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   Grand Prize: 3d/2n at Boracay, round Trip tickets to Boracay for 2 with hotel accommodation plus P20,000 pocket money (1 winner)
   1st Prize: Olympus MJU mini digital camera (1 winner)
   2nd Prize: iRiver H320 mp3 player 20 GB (1 winner)
   3rd Prize: Nokia 6260 unit only (1 winner)
   4th Prize: MuVo Slim mp3 player 128MB (5 winners)
   5th Prize: MuVo TX mp3 player 128MB (5 winners)
   Consolation Prizes Timex Watches (30 winners)
5. Deadline of submission of entries is on May 31, 2005 at 9:00 pm
6. All winners will be drawn at 6:00 pm on June 10, 2005 at Axis Global Technologies Head Office #20 North Road cor 3rd Avenue, Cubao Quezon City witnessed by a DTI representative.
7. A participant can win only once. If a name wins more than once he gets the bigger prize.
8. Winners will be announced through Axis Global Technologies , Inc.'s Website (www.axisglobal.com) and will be notified through registered mail.
9. Winners may claim their prizes at:
   NCR WINNERS: Axis Global Manila office - #20 North Road cor 3rd Avenue, Cubao, Q.C
   (Mondays to Fridays 10:00am to 5:00pm and Saturdays 10:00am to 3:00pm)
   CEBU WINNERS: Axis Global Cebu office - Madre Realty compound, P. Remedio St Banilad, Mandaue city
   (Mondays to Fridays 10:00am to 5:00pm and Saturdays 10:00am to 3:00pm)
   PROVINCIAL WINNERS: Winners may claim their prize at the nearest retail outlet indicated in the registered mail
10. To claim their prizes, winners must present a valid ID (any of the following: driver's license, company ID, Student ID, SSS/GSIS/TIN ID), original invoice/receipt of item purchased, registered notice and the winning raffle stub. Claiming period shall be within 60 days from receipt of notification.
11. All employees of Axis Global Technologies, Inc., its dealers, affiliates and advertising agency, including their relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified to join the promotion.
12. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash
13. Winners shall pay 20% tax for prizes exceeding Php 10,000.00

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Philippines, here we come!

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

Apaliin Trail in Subic Bay

Why go: Everyone should trek at least once in their lives. And if you've never trekked in your life, the Apaliin Trail is a good place to start. Survive the easy hike through Subic forest, get a crash course on the lives of tribes and the use of medicinal plants, learn how to start a fire using a bamboo, drink fresh water from bamboo, watch your guide climb trees and bring down leaves for you to taste. Let Apaliin Point take your breath away and enjoy the scenic banca ride to Miracle Beach. And if you decide to go, you might want to request for Mang Casuy, a precious little Aeta man who is our favorite Apaliin tour guide.

What to bring: Not much, you wouldn't want to be overloaded while you trek. Your camera and a bottle of mineral water would be good.

Call (047) 2524032 for reservations. P250 per head.

Mines View in Baguio City

Why go: Because you need to have your photo taken with Doglas, the ultra-adorable St. Bernard. Countless people have been unable to resist his charms even if his owner charges per picture. Doglas is so cute you'd want to bring him home. He even has his own Friendster account.

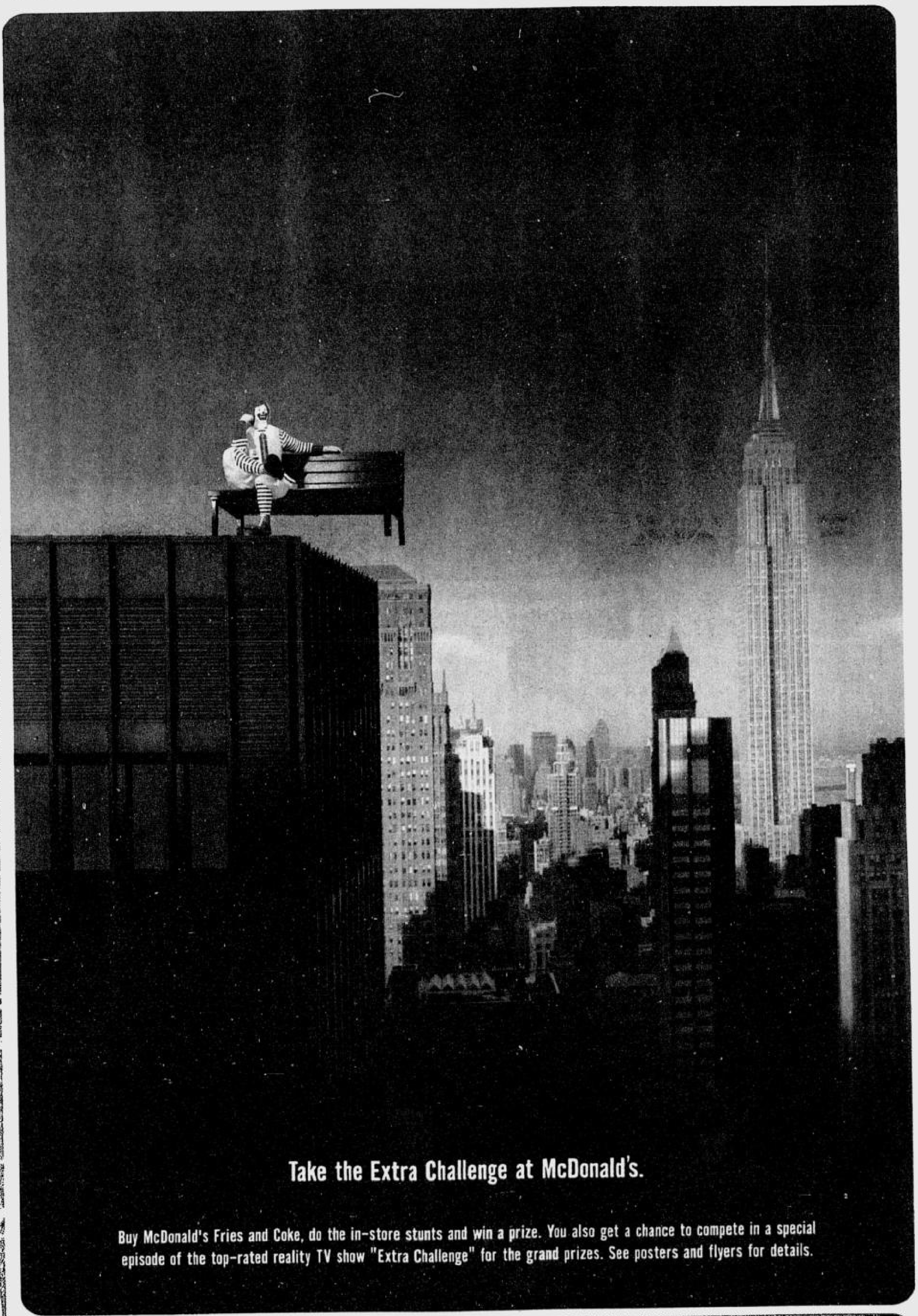
What to bring: Your camera and someone to pose with

Monkey Trail

at the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan

Why go: Because hanging out with the monitor lizards can cure your fear of reptiles and you can spend several crazy hours chasing monkeys and watching them try to steal other people's food.

What to bring: A camera

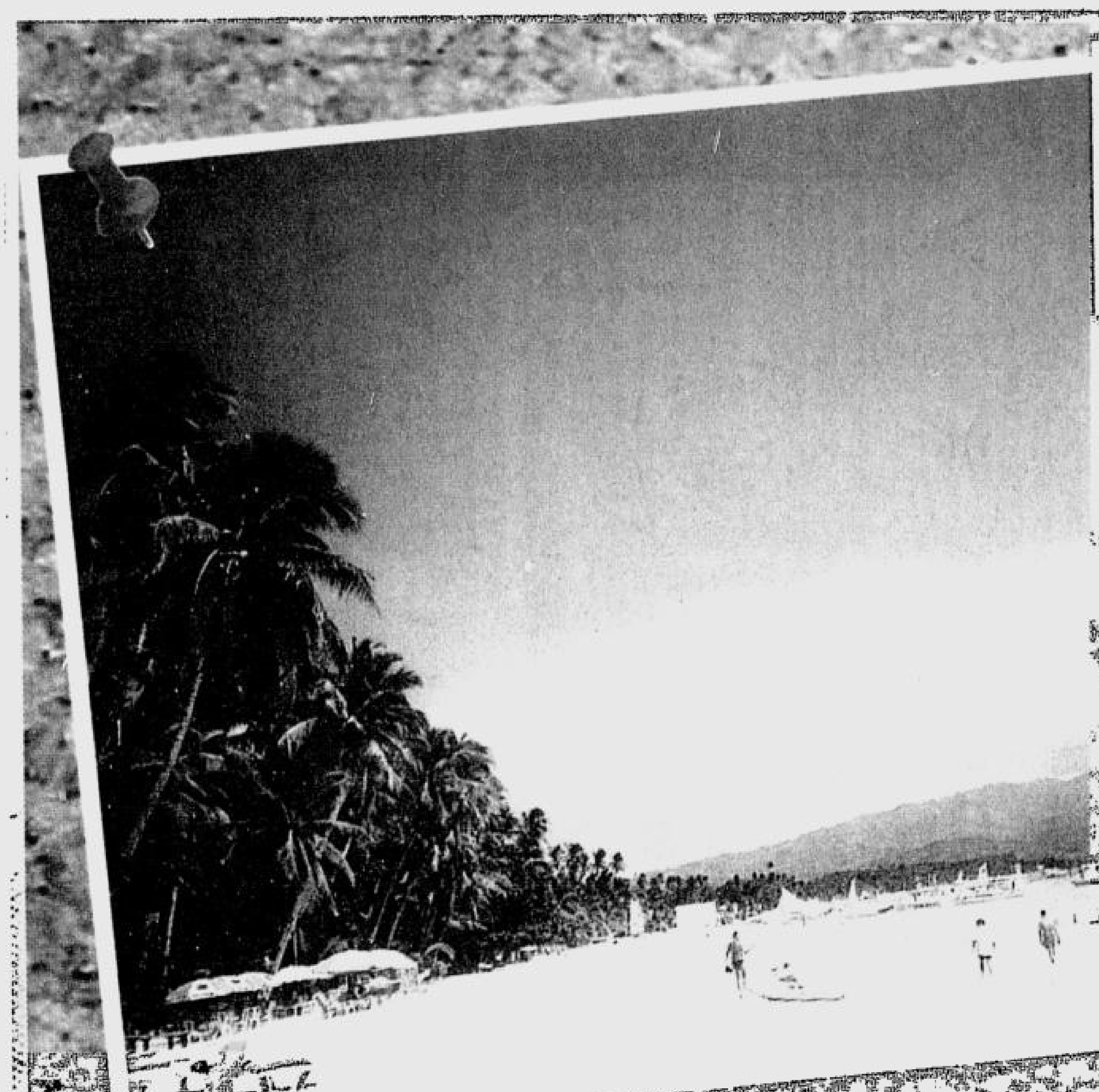


Take the Extra Challenge at McDonald's.

Buy McDonald's Fries and Coke, do the in-store stunts and win a prize. You also get a chance to compete in a special episode of the top-rated reality TV show "Extra Challenge" for the grand prizes. See posters and flyers for details.

Take the extra challenge at McDonald's

love ko 'to



Boracay

Why go: Ten things. White sand. Mango banana shakes. Watersports. Great pizza. Parties. Your sudden ability to take postcard photos. Lying on the sand under a blanket of stars. Living without shoes. Eating hotdogs and barbecue at 4 a.m. And again, the sand.

What to bring: Sunblock, your bathing suit and your camera

Enchanted Kingdom

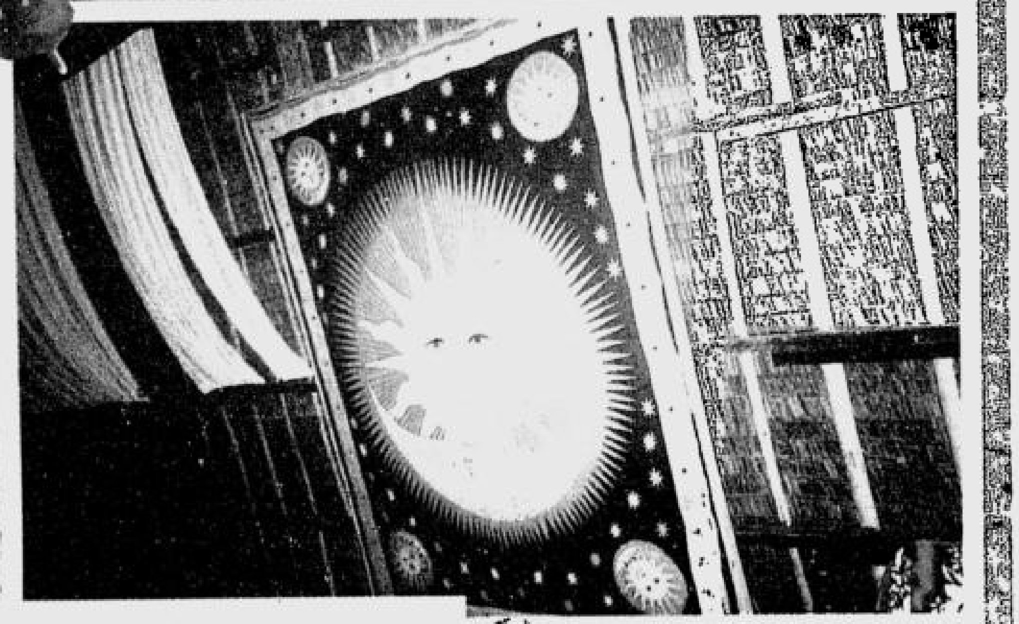
Why go: Because you have to eat Tacones, play paintball, make bets on who will get soaked by the Rio Grande Rapids and watch the awesome fireworks display.

What to bring: Your camera, a change of clothes in case you get soaked by the rapids and lots of friends

Sunburst in Cebu

Why go: Because the chicken skin is so soooo good. So good that sometimes we seal orders in Ziploc bands and bring them home to Manila.

What to bring: A blood pressure pump. Kidding. Sunburst has branches all over Cebu.



True Food, Boracay

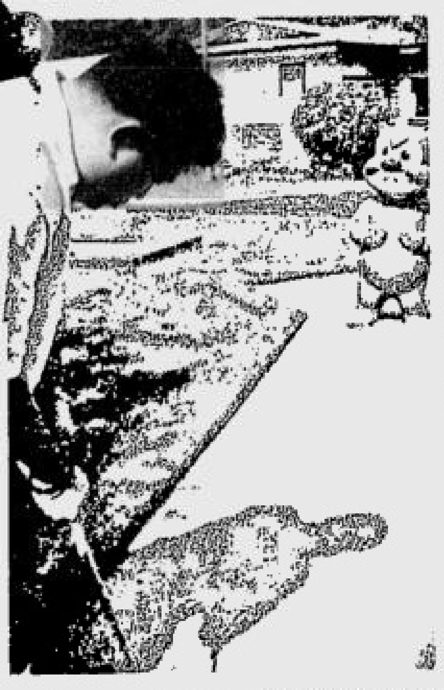
Why go: Because it's nice to take off your shoes, lean back on plump pillows and enjoy Indian food after a crazy day at the beach. Must-orders are the tandoori chicken, samosa, crispy papad and hummus.

What to bring: A big appetite

Sabang Beach in Palawan

Why go: We discovered this gorgeous beach by accident. It is beautiful and unforgettable. The white sand is unspoiled, a refreshing change from the beaches we know now. When we were there, a dog decided to follow us as we walked along the shore. Maybe he'll be there too when you go.

What to bring: A bathing suit, a camera and a lot of friends to help you keep your memories



Camp John Hay in Baguio City

Why go: You can channel Tiger Woods and play mini-golf. When you're sick of golf clubs, check out the souvenir shops and the numerous restaurants.

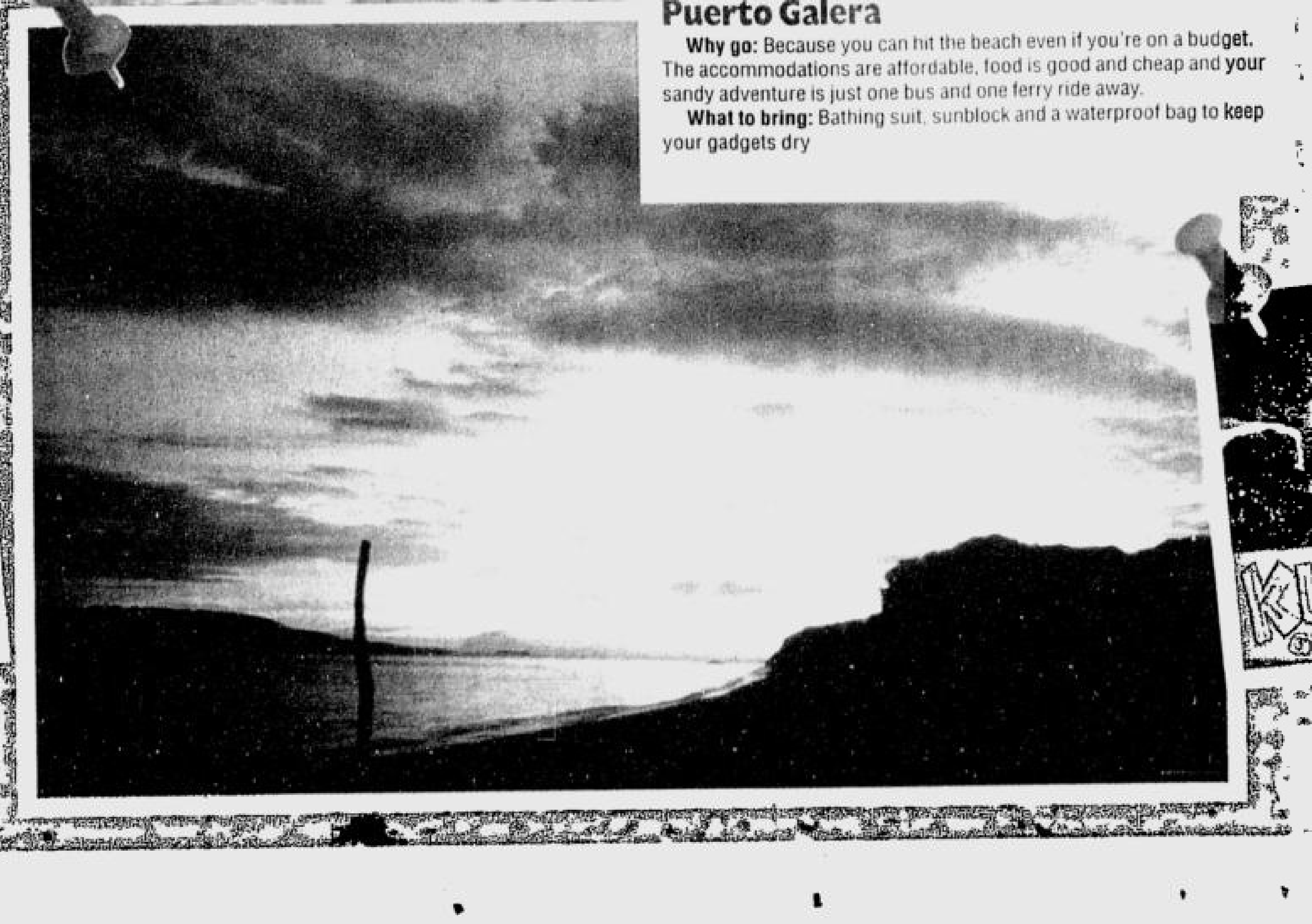
What to bring: Someone competitive to bring the game to another level and a camera so you can take pictures of your best puts

Good Shepherd Convent in Baguio City

Why go: The flowers are pretty, and the ube jam is so good that people wait in line to get jars to bring home. So many people buy that the good sisters actually have to set limits on the number of jars you can buy.

What to bring: Cash and comfy shoes. You'll need comfy feet for waiting in line.

The Good Shepherd Convent is located at Gibraltar Road.



Puerto Galera

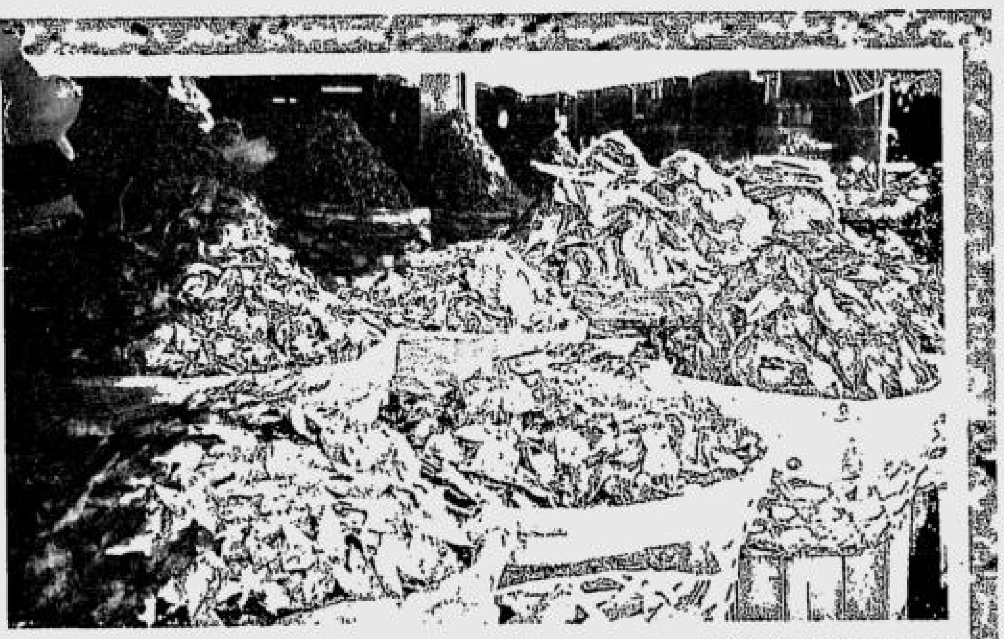
Why go: Because you can hit the beach even if you're on a budget. The accommodations are affordable, food is good and cheap and your sandy adventure is just one bus and one ferry ride away.

What to bring: Bathing suit, sunblock and a waterproof bag to keep your gadgets dry

Dos Palmas Arrecefi Resort, Palawan

Why go: Because, man, if you're still staying away because of Abu Sayyaf and the passing of a matinee idol, that's really sad. Dos Palmas is a gorgeous paradise. There's wind surfing, fishing, kayaking and snorkeling for people who think just splashing in the water isn't enough.

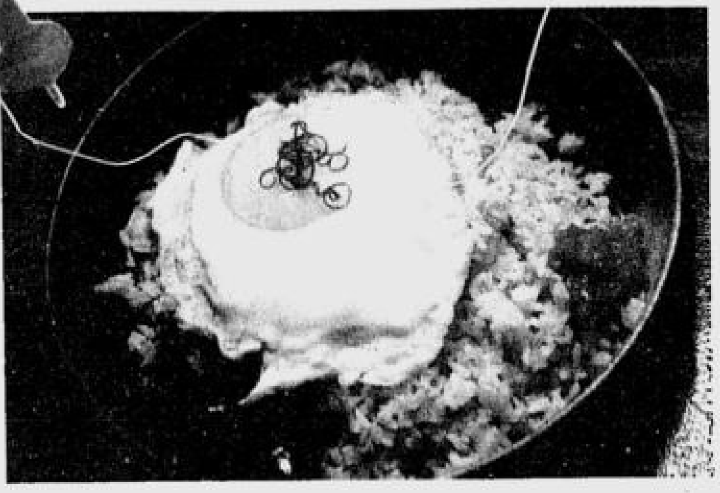
What to bring: A camera, swimsuits and a ton of sunblock



Taboan Market in Cebu

Why go: Because you can find all kinds of dried fish in one place. Just make sure they pack the fish well so it doesn't smell.

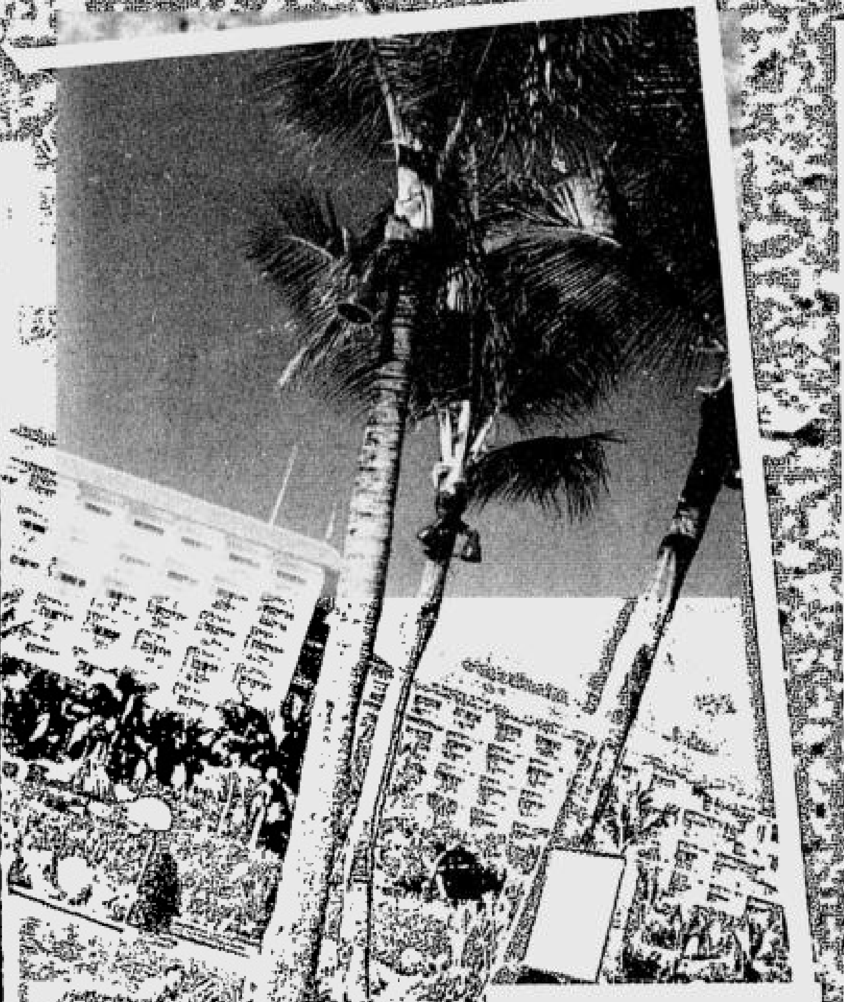
What to bring: An extra shirt, because the smell can cling to your clothes



Tsai Asian Restaurant and Tea Salon in Cebu

Why go: Because the food is incredible. And affordable. My last visit to Tsai was three years ago, and I still can't forget the *kesong puti* crostini, *chorizo* fried rice, *bagoong adobo* fried rice and roasted duck with pancakes.

What to bring: A big appetite and someone you love to share the meal with. Tsai is at Unit 13 Crossroads Mall, Banilad Road, Cebu City.

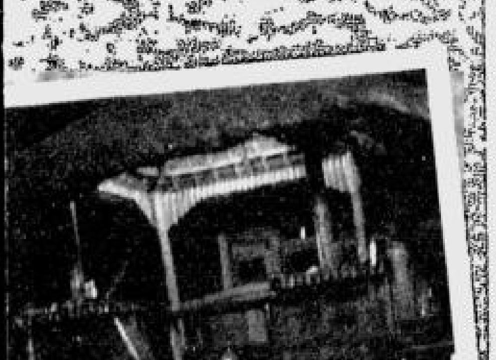


Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort in Cebu

Why go: There are a million reasons. You can go to the beach, feed the fish and let them swarm around you. When you're tired of the beach, you can go to the different pools. When you're tired of the pools, you can go back to the beach. You can give watersports a shot. You can enjoy the mouth-watering buffet at Tides and indulge in the chocolate fountain for dessert. At Cowrie Cove, you can pose for a picture with your dinner before they cook it. You can order fresh chilled coconut juice from Buko Bar and Grill, and enjoy it by the pool.

What to bring: Beach gear, cash and a camera

Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort is at Punta Engano Road, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. Call (63 32) 2310288 or fax (63 32) 2311688. E-mail mac@shangri-la.com or visit www.shangri-la.com



Kubo Grill in Baguio City

Why go: You get your own *kubo* where you can feast on all kinds of food—from fishballs and *kikiam* to buttered chicken, *chop suey* and *inihaw na liempo*. On some nights, acoustic acts serenade you with cheesy songs.

What to bring: Friends you want to share your food with

Kubo Grill is at Legarda Road, Baguio City.

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- 14x/12x optical zoom
- Night/Super Night/Night Plus modes
- Mini video light (OPTURA 40)
- Built-in flash for stills

OPTURA 500/400
- 2.2 megapixel CCD
- 10x optical zoom
- Night/Super Night/Night Plus modes
- Mini video light (OPTURA 500)
- Built-in flash for stills

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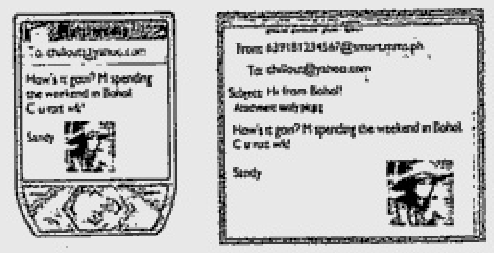
To: chillout@yahoo.com
How's it goin? M spending the weekend in Bohol
C u not wk'
Sandy

From: 639181234567@smart.mms.ph
To: chillout@yahoo.com
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How's it goin? M spending the weekend in Bohol
C u not wk!
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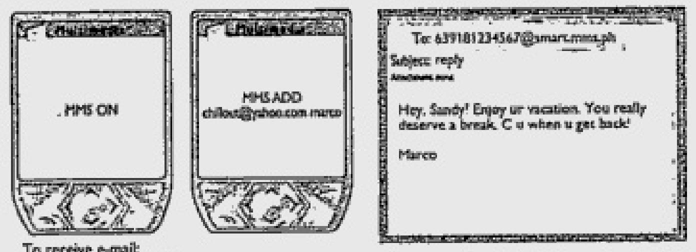
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MMS CONTACT	To view the list of e-mail addresses in your Contact List
ALERTOFF	To stop receiving free SMS alerts
ALERTON	To resume free SMS alerts
MMS BLOCK <e-mail address>	To stop receiving messages and alerts from a specific e-mail address
MMS UNBLOCK <e-mail address>	To unblock an e-mail address
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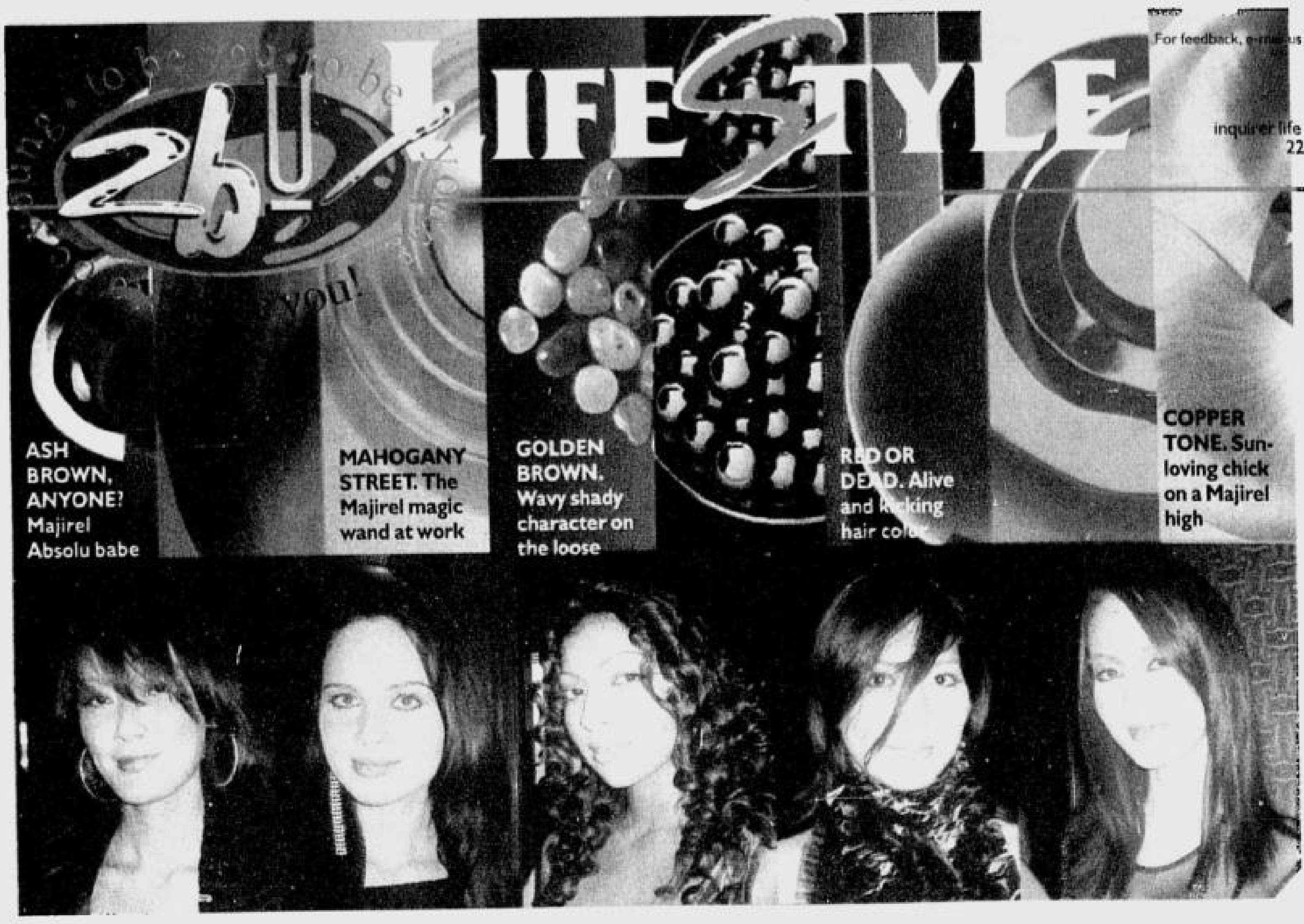

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PART of L'Oreal's commitment to bringing the best, Andrew Barton, British Hairdresser of the Year, is coming to Manila this April 25. He is the international creative director for Saks, the UK's leading franchise salon group.

Living life in full (hair) color

Tim Yap

HOLLYWOOD hairstylist **Oribe Canales**, who visited Manila in the '80s, once said the future belonged to hair color. He saw the world with multi-shaded streaks and full heads of various hues that could rival the rainbow.

Well, more than two decades later, one of the Philippines' most important filmmakers is releasing a film about Pinoys going blond (I'm referring to **Peque Gallaga**—but more about his film in a later column.)

In Singapore for L'Oreal Professionnel's Majirel (for the virgins, Majirel is the world's leading hair color range), Japan-based technical director **Patrick Canizet**, who creates formulas specifically for Asian hair, spoke lengthily on the science of hair color. Surprisingly, he was bald, but the scientist nonetheless bragged about how the best—that's Majirel magic, ladies and gentlemen—just got better.

Like a preacher, he spoke about the future, how cities all over Asia have embraced hair color. And he had the figures to prove it. Countries we look up to in *teleserye* and J-pop, K-pop terms, like Japan, Korea and Taiwan, have their population way up there in terms of colored crowning glory.

Whopping numbers

Japan is, of course, tops with a whopping 80 percent of its denizens dyeing their locks (**Tessa Prieto-Valdes** and I would look like regular pedestrians there), while Korea and Taiwan share an overwhelming 75 percent (I can actually work as a *telenovela* actor in these countries!).

Singapore has almost half of its population into it, lah—at 45 percent. The Philippines, lovers of hot oil, rebonding and "*buhaghag*-free" (pardon the term) hair, stands at 37 percent.

Yes, we are still a natural hair color-loving nation. Over in our 7,107 isles, the Maria Claras still like to play it safe while reading their Cosmo sex tips. 84 percent of women (that's you, your mother and your grandmother and her *yaya*) are scared to have their hair colored, because of fear of damage.

False myths on hair color still abound—old wives' tales like you're going blind once you color your hair, or the more you color, the more white hair will grow.

Okay, you choose—who do you want to look like—**Judi Dench** or **Catherine Zeta-Jones**? Or for that matter, **Mary Walter** (bless her soul) or **Charlene Gonzales** (who, may I point out, gets her dose of hair color treatments at H Salon—just like me and the rest of people who know that **Henri Calayag** is the hair-care genius this side of town. Okay, shameless plug.)

Experimentation and self-expression

But what I want to point out is that, just because your present hair color is not your natu-

LIVING/F3

> Go ahead, paint yourself and your world in whatever shade you wish

CROWNING GLORY. Patrick Canivet, L'Oreal's technical director from Japan

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

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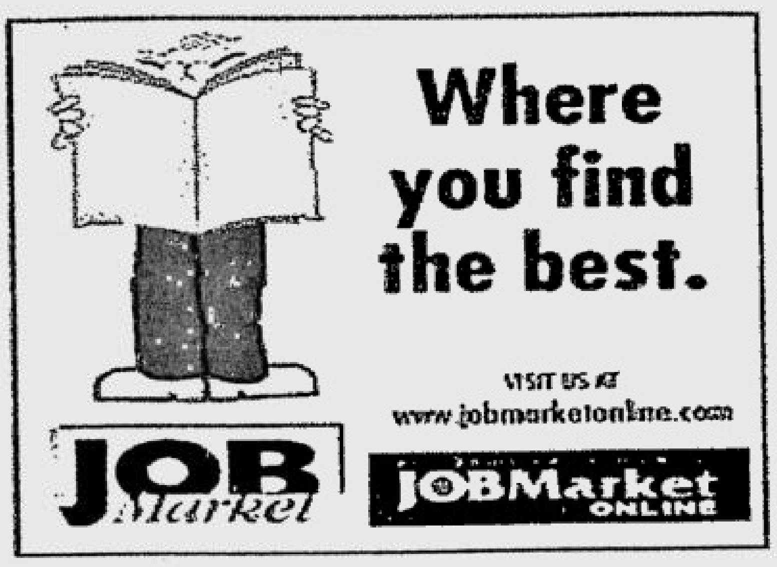
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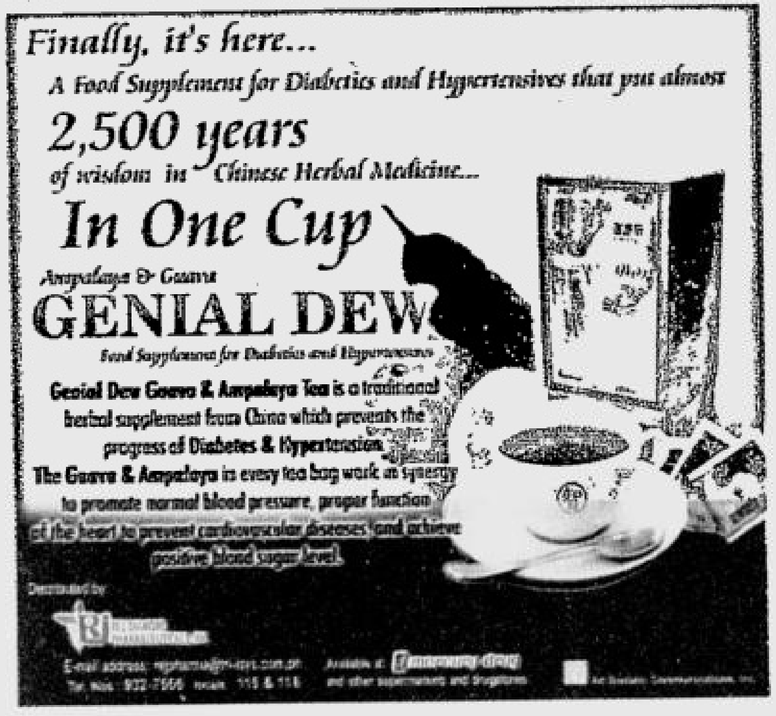
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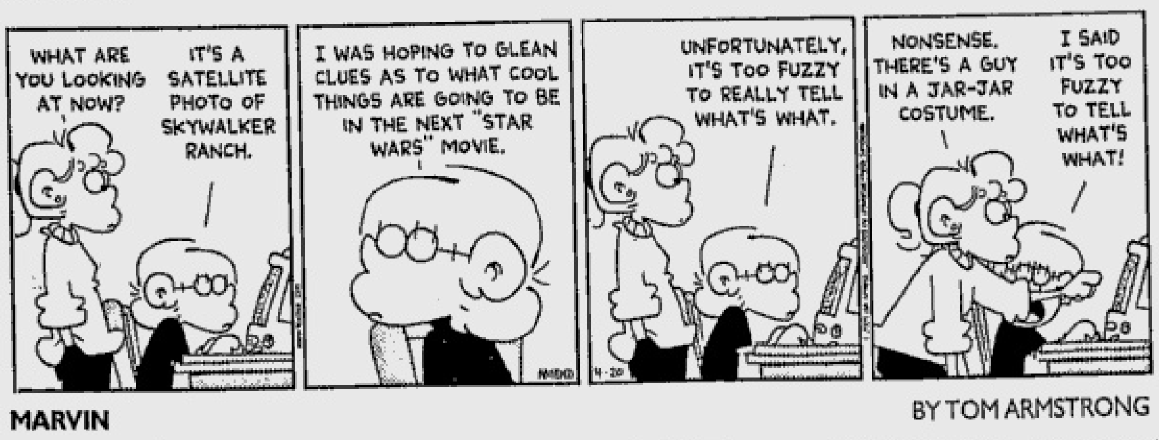
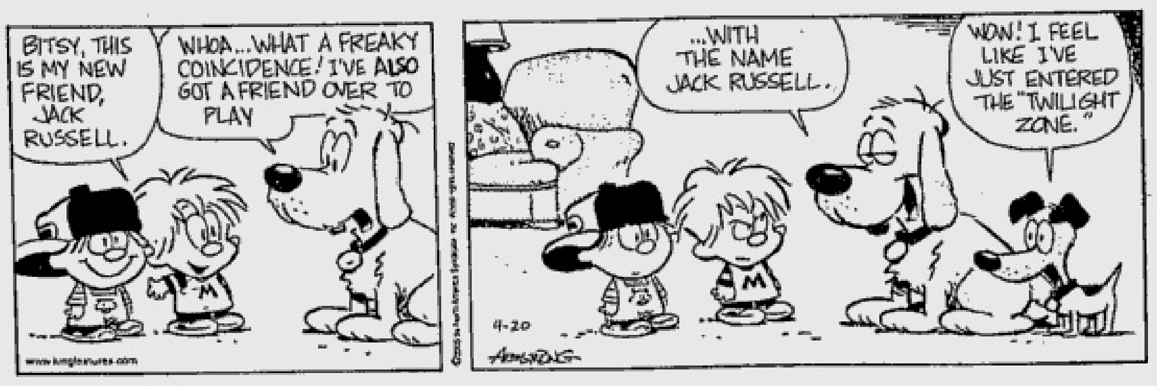

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT NOW?
IT'S A SATELLITE PHOTO OF SKYWALKER RANCH.
I WAS HOPING TO GLEAN CLUES AS TO WHAT COOL THINGS ARE GOING TO BE IN THE NEXT "STAR WARS" MOVIE.
UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S TOO FUZZY TO REALLY TELL WHAT'S WHAT.
NONSENSE. THERE'S A GUY IN A JAR-JAR COSTUME.
I SAID IT'S TOO FUZZY TO TELL WHAT'S WHAT!
4-20

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BITSY, THIS IS MY NEW FRIEND, JACK RUSSELL.
WHOA...WHAT A FREAKY COINCIDENCE! I'VE ALSO GOT A FRIEND OVER TO PLAY
...WITH THE NAME JACK RUSSELL.
WOW! I FEEL LIKE I'VE JUST ENTERED THE "TWILIGHT ZONE."
4-20
ARMSTRONG
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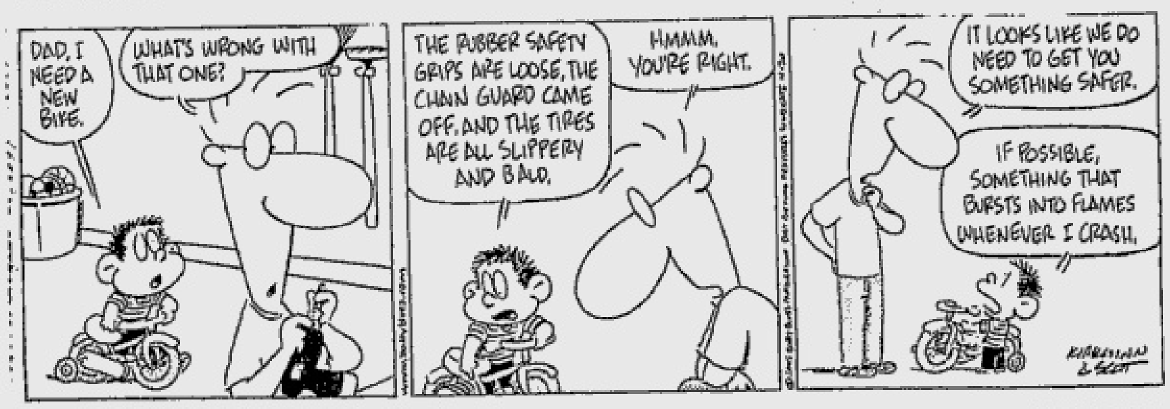
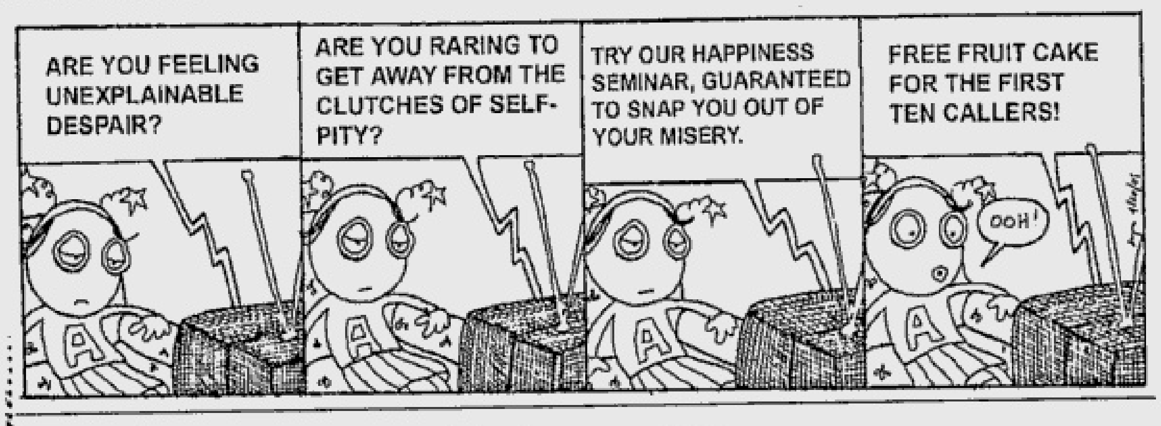
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


DAD, I NEED A NEW BIKE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT ONE?
THE RUBBER SAFETY GRIPS ARE LOOSE, THE CHAIN GUARD CAME OFF, AND THE TIRES ARE ALL SLIPPERY AND BALD.
HMMM. YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT LOOKS LIKE WE DO NEED TO GET YOU SOMETHING SAFER.
IF POSSIBLE, SOMETHING THAT BURSTS INTO FLAMES WHENEVER I CRASH.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have strong leadership skills. You want success, power and accomplishment. It's as if you want to do everything! Your strong ambitions always inspire others as well. In your personal life, you are very private, and you entertain a lot of fantasies. You are very intuitive, and intensely physical. Work hard this year for rewards in 2006. Birthdate of: Ryan O'Neal, actor; Carmen Electra, actress; Jessica Lange, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can get a lot done at work today. You know that if you take care of the little things, the big things will take care of themselves. (And you're right.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Use your creative, artistic talents to do something practical today. This is an excellent day to help, teach or assist children in any way.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Do some long-range financial planning connected with home and family today. Think about what you want to get done in the next year. How can you budget for these things?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with siblings and those who are older and more experienced can be very beneficial for you today. Pick someone's brain. Learn from the mistakes of others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Whatever you buy today will probably last a long time. You feel unusually practical and resourceful right now. You're even watching your pennies!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent day to make long-range plans for anything. You want to sort your future out. You want to be prepared for the unexpected. (Good!)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Someone older might give you some spiritual advice today. Do not be quick to dismiss what others have to say. Later, you will appreciate the wisdom of their words.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to present your ideas to someone in authority, or to your boss or a parent. You're being realistic. What you have to say is worth listening to!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Make long-range plans for travel and/or education today. Your expectations are solid and right on the money. You know what you're doing.

CAPRICORN: (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might hear from someone who is a far distance away. It could be news that is encouraging, and at the same time, it involves practical planning on the part of everyone.

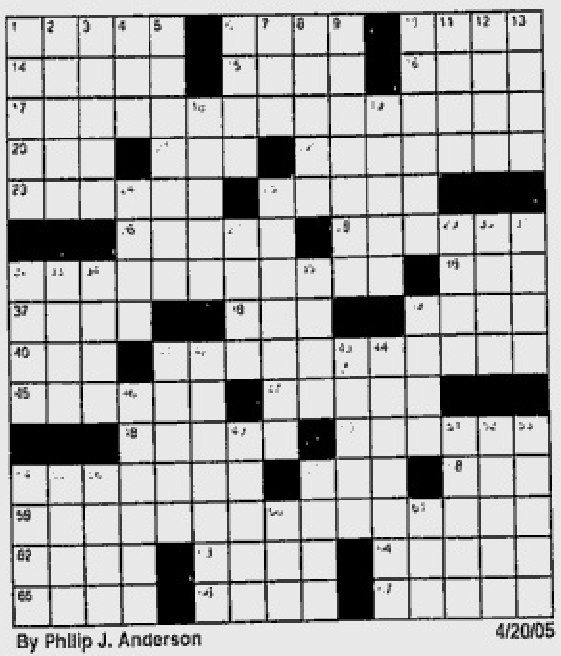
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Go through your possessions and things you own jointly with others. Pare down and streamline things. Make your life simpler. (Make sure you own your possessions and they don't own you.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent day for serious, practical discussions with partners and close friends. You're not being frivolous; you're in a sensible frame of mind. With this attitude, much can be accomplished!

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Top floor
6 Pokes
10 Baby's bed
14 __ firma
15 Bk. of Revelations
16 Uncommon
17 That's all folks!
20 Dem. of the '50s
21 Begley and Wynn
22 Undergoes sudden damage
23 Do cobbling
25 Respond to a stimulus
26 AAA suggestion
28 Cohort of Vishnu and Siva
32 That's all folks!
36 Leading ISP
37 Manila machete
38 Opp. of neg.
39 Cemetery piece
40 "__ Fly Away"
41 That's all folks!
45 Oil-yielding seed
47 Yearned
48 Surrenders by treaty
50 Lent end
54 Rum cocktails
57 Took a chair
58 "Exodus" hero
59 That's all folks!
62 WWI battle site
63 Samoan capital
64 Cheese coats
65 Zealous
66 Future atty's hurdle
67 First name in cosmetics

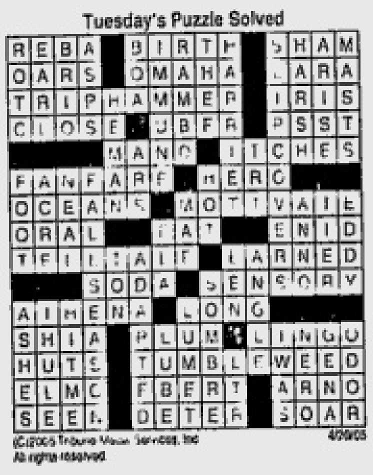
DOWN
1 Fighting battles
2 Small titter
3 Powdery volcanic rock
4 NYC subway line
5 King Arthur's court
6 Unsettles
7 Imitator
8 Italian bowling game
9 Egyptian beetles
10 Ridge on a bone
11 Impetuous
12 "Dies __"
13 Tunisian rulers
18 Ancient Greek bandstand
19 Mother-of-pearl
24 Roughly
25 Makes up for
27 Key blunder
29 Robust
30 Wasteland
31 Der __ (Adenauer)
32 Nile wader
33 Part in a play
34 Building wings
35 Italian wine center
39 Advanced degs.
41 Words of clarification
42 One kind of insurance
43 Ryan or Tatum
44 Face part
46 Movement
49 Internal buy-out letters
51 Sully
52 Eat away
53 Hose off
54 Halloween wear
55 Pot starter
56 Out of work
57 Buzz off!
60 Actress Peeples
61 Female sib



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

4/20/05

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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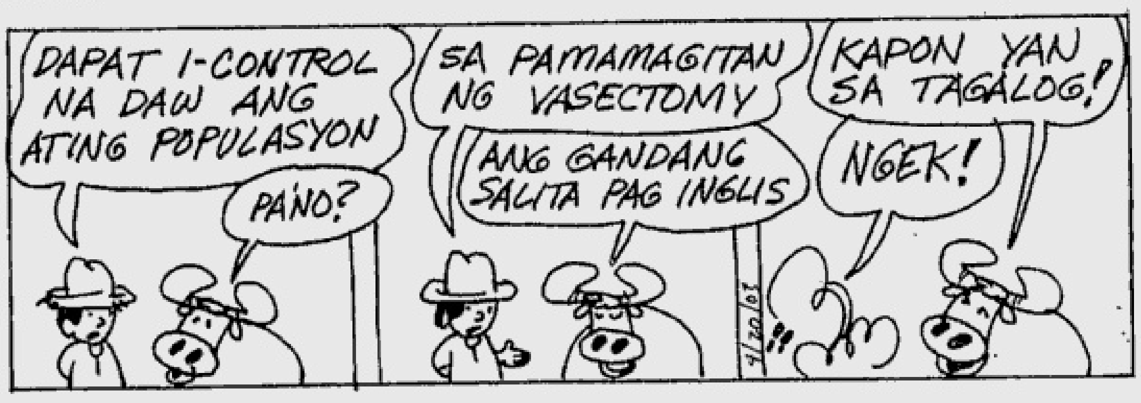
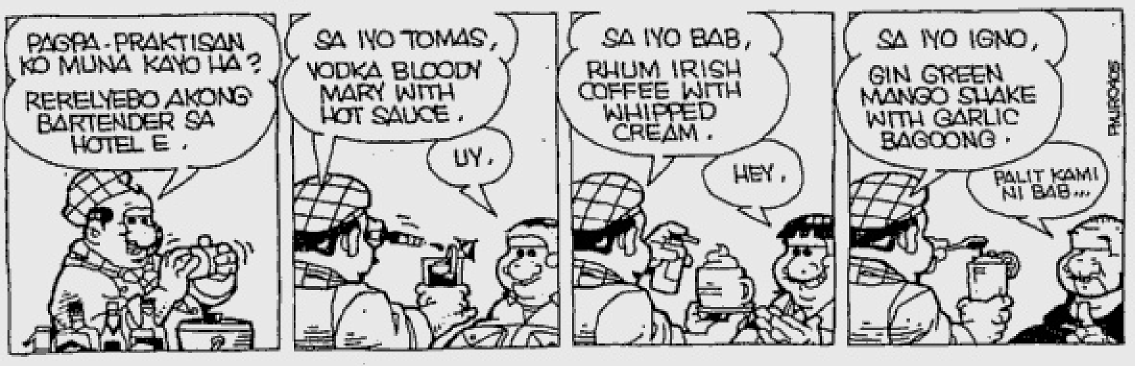
4/20/05

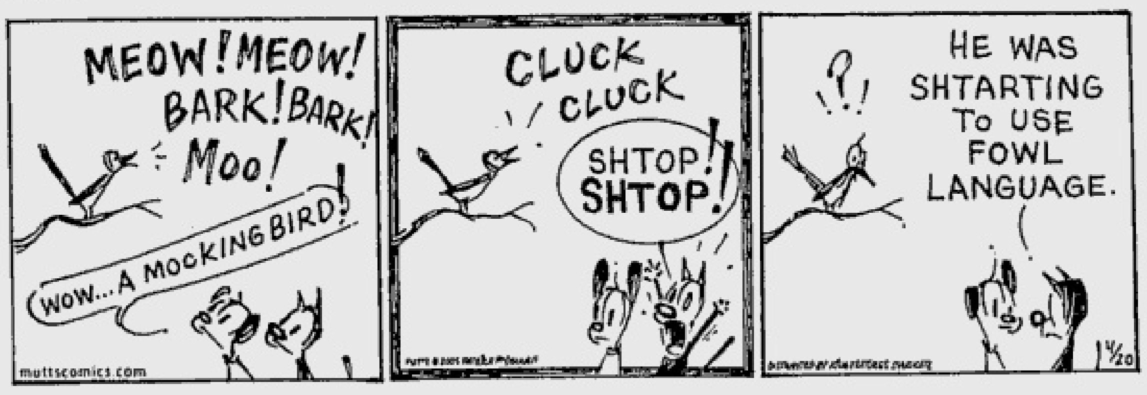
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DAPAT I-CONTROL NA DAW ANG ATING POPULASYON
PAÑO?
SA PAMAMAGITAN NG VASECTOMY
ANG GANDANG SALITA PAG INGLIS
KAPON YAN SA TAGALOG!
NGEK!
4/20/05

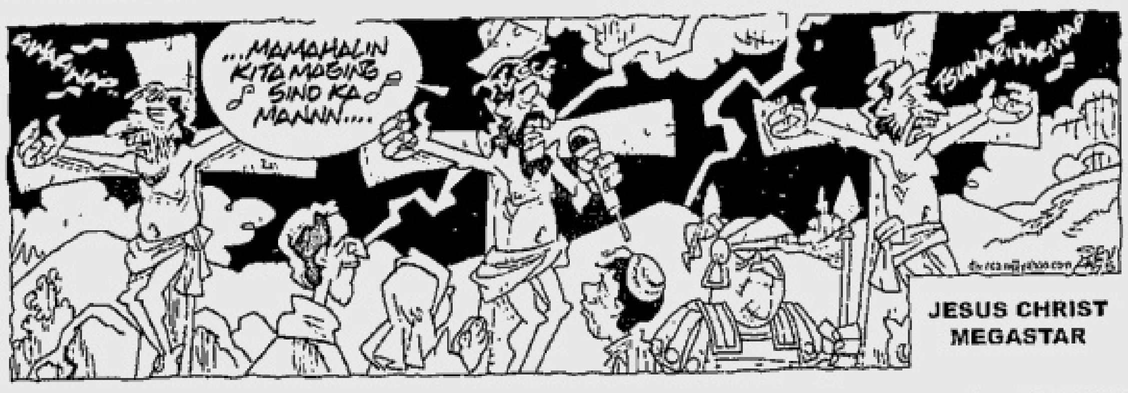
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAGPA-PRAKTISAN KO MUNA KAYO HA? RERELYEBO AKONG BARTENDER SA HOTEL E.
SA IYO TOMAS, VODKA BLOODY MARY WITH HOT SAUCE.
UY.
SA IYO BAB, RHUM IRISH COFFEE WITH WHIPPED CREAM.
HEY.
SA IYO IGNO, GIN GREEN MANGO SHAKE WITH GARLIC BAGOONG.
PALIT KAMI NI BAB...
PMJR

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

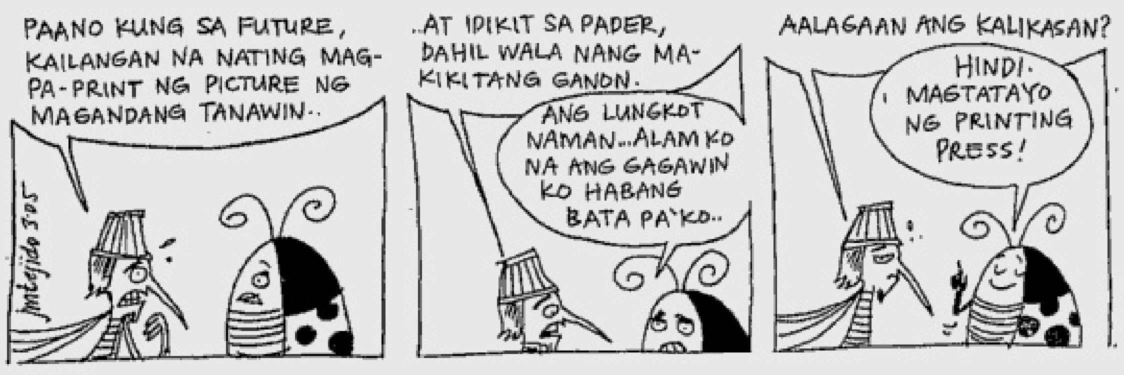

MEOW! MEOW! BARK! BARK! Moo!
WOW...A MOCKING BIRD!
CLUCK CLUCK
SHTOP! SHTOP!
HE WAS SHTARTING TO USE FOWL LANGUAGE.
muttscomics.com
4/20

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

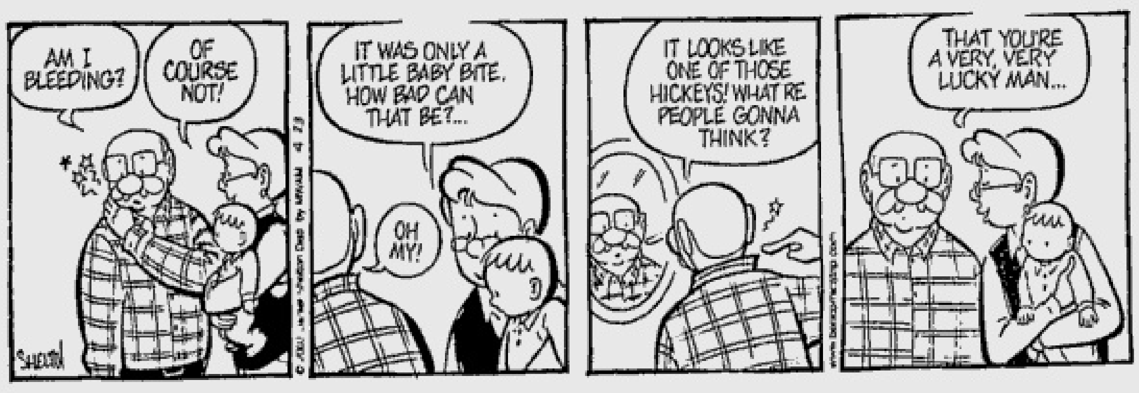

...MAMAHALIN KITA MAGING SINO KA MAN...
BWAHAHAHAHA

JESUS CHRIST MEGASTAR

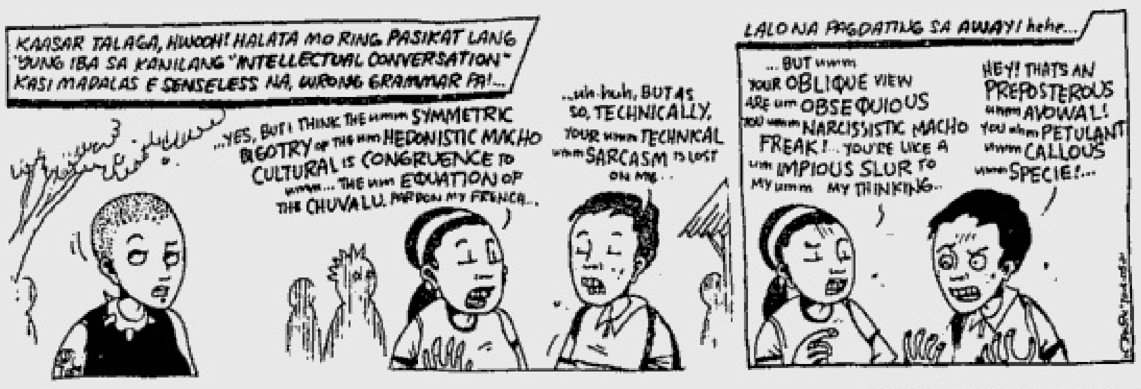
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAANO KUNG SA FUTURE, KAILANGAN NA NATING MAG-PA-PRINT NG PICTURE NG MAGANDANG TANAWIN..
..AT IDIKIT SA PADER, DAHIL WALA NANG MA-KIKITANG GANON.
ANG LUNGKOT NAMAN...ALAM KO NA ANG GAGAWIN KO HABANG BATA PA'KO..
AALAGAAN ANG KALIKASAN?
HINDI. MAGTATAYO NG PRINTING PRESS!
jmtejido 3.05

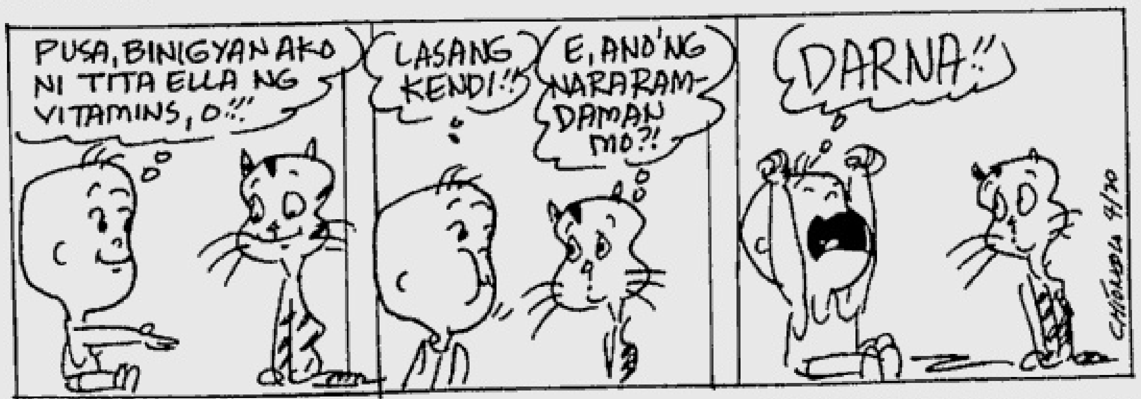
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


AM I BLEEDING?
OF COURSE NOT!
IT WAS ONLY A LITTLE BABY BITE. HOW BAD CAN THAT BE?...
OH MY!
IT LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THOSE HICKEYS! WHAT'RE PEOPLE GONNA THINK?
THAT YOU'RE A VERY, VERY LUCKY MAN...
SHELTON

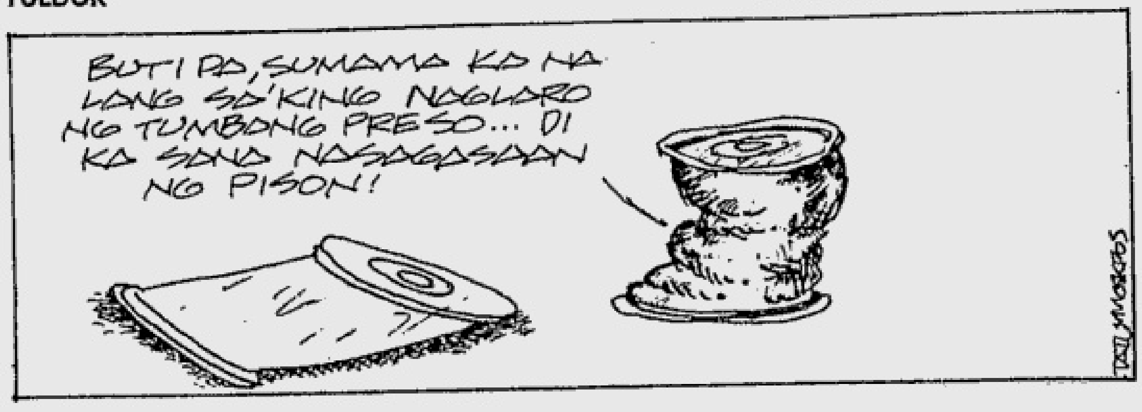
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


KAASAR TALAGA, HWOOH! HALATA MO RING PASIKAT LANG 'YUNG IBA SA KANILANG "INTELLECTUAL CONVERSATION" KASI MADALAS E SENSELESS NA, WRONG GRAMMAR PA!...
...YES, BUT I THINK THE umm SYMMETRIC BIGOTRY of THE umm HEDONISTIC MACHO CULTURAL IS CONGRUENCE TO umm... THE umm EQUATION OF THE CHUVALU, PARDON MY FRENCH...
...uh-huh, BUT AS SO, TECHNICALLY, YOUR umm TECHNICAL umm SARCASM IS LOST ON ME...
LALO NA PAGDATING SA AWAY! hehe...
...BUT umm YOUR OBLIQUE VIEW ARE um OBSEQUIOUS YOU umm NARCISSISTIC MACHO FREAK!... YOU'RE LIKE A um IMPIOUS SLUR TO MY umm MY THINKING...
HEY! THAT'S AN PREPOSTEROUS umm AVOWAL! YOU uhm PETULANT umm CALLOUS umm SPECIE!...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, BINIGYAN AKO NI TITA ELLA NG VITAMINS, O!!
LASANG KENDI!!
E, ANO'NG NARARAMDAMAN MO?!
DARNA!!
CHIONGLO 4/20

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BUTI PO, SUMAMA KA NA LANG SA'KING NAGLARO NG TUMBONG PRESO... DI KA SANA NASAGASAAN NG PISON!

L'OREAL TEAM SPIRIT. Melanie Cuevas, Liza Ilarde and Angelique Villaraza in Singapore

L'OREAL BULLETIN. Tricia Duavit and Carl Javier

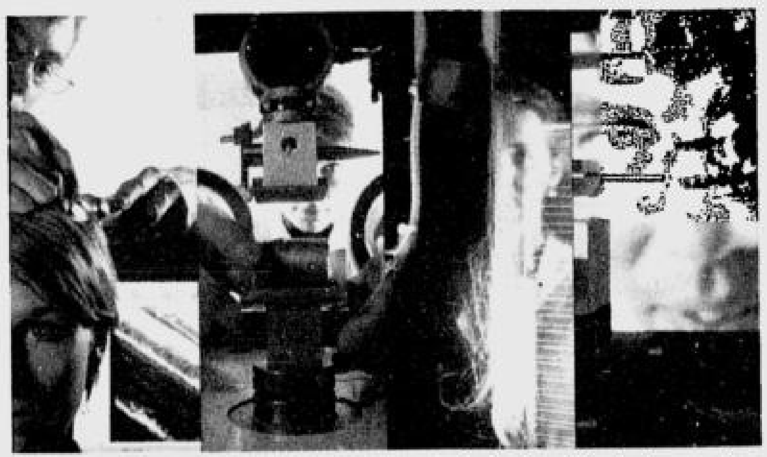
PREVIEW of fearless females. Claire Betita-Samson and Joanna Francisco

H SALON advocates Celine Lopez and Yaparazzi

HAIR break-through. Isabelle Bourjade, L'Oreal Singapore Salon Division general manager, reveals her research.

Living life in full (hair) color

From page F1



THE BEST just got better. Hair diagnosis, hair elasticity, hair porosity and hair resistance tests—Absolu Majirel is the product of these extensive benchmarking procedures.

ALL THE FUSS about color. Because Asian hair is worth it.

ral hue doesn't mean you're not being your true self. It's definitely not like a nose job that gets blotched, or a boob job on a Viva Hot Babe (or a butt job on a Viva Hot Man, for that matter). Think of it as part of a wardrobe change.

"Those markets are confident with experimentation, and self expression extends to their hair. For them, hair is a real fashion accessory," explains **Tricia Duavit**, business unit manager for L'Oreal, sporting a reddish hue. I can't agree more.

We also have science to thank, for coming out with products that take care of the natural quality of what is God-given while still making sure the nutrients our strands need are provided for, and that, yes, we will not go blind when we color our hair.

"The business of beauty has become really advanced. Many new and improved formulas come out every month, and they're not supposed to raise the confidence of Filipinos on embracing hair color. We're just too happy to be at the forefront of it," says Angelique Villaraza, my sparring partner when it comes to luxe hair care, impulsive shopping and Tali excursions. And you thought it was only Nokia that releases new stuff every month.

(Speaking of which, I just lost my mobile phone last weekend—so paging everyone who is reading this, please text me your numbers! And for the person who has my phone, please delete my "video"—kidding. Okay, I digress again.)

Revolutionary product

Now back to the program. Absolute care, color and confidence—that's what I got from the lecture of the bald man who resembled **Max Brenner** a bit.

With Majirel, say goodbye to your fears because this revolutionary product contains these patented molecules called Ionène G and Incell that penetrate straight into the cortex, so it protects your hair from the inside while coloring. Ionène G and Incell are two complementary agents that treat the entire hair fiber, making it strong, manageable and healthy.

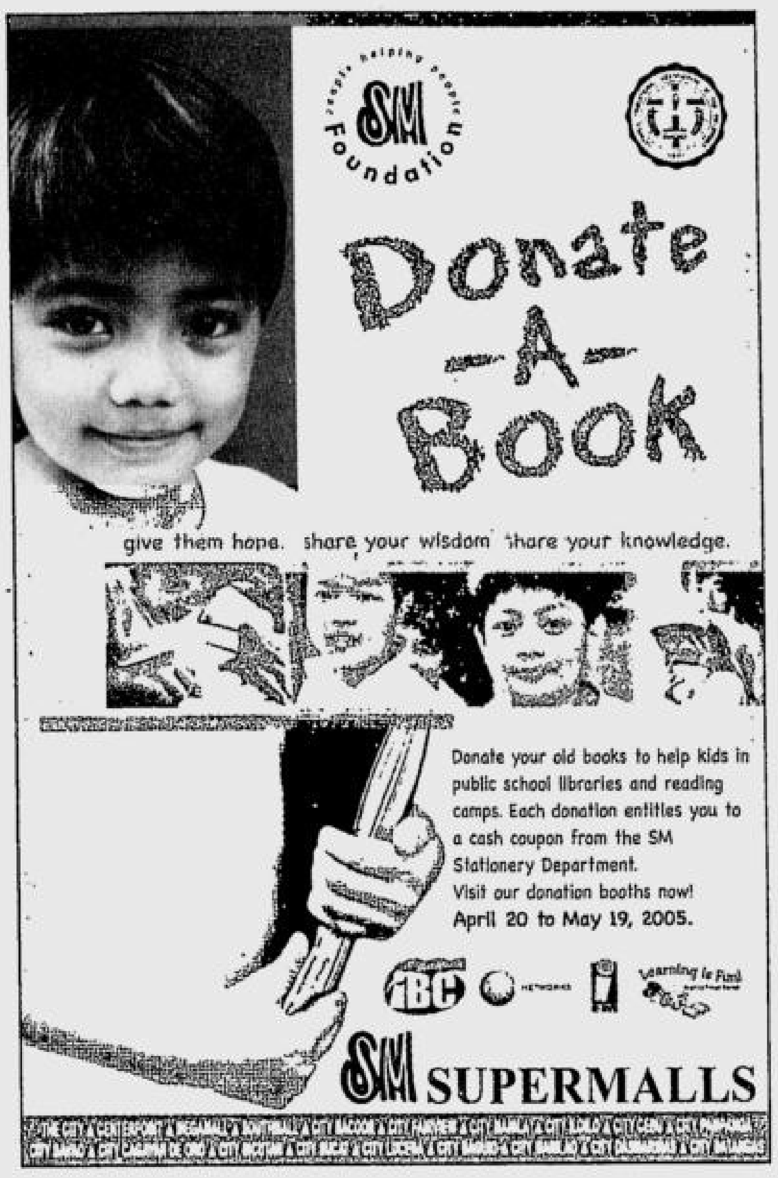
Incell strengthens the hair cuticle while Ionène G reinforces the surface of the hair follicle, making hair soft and smooth. So the more you color, the better your hair becomes. Plus, the treatment itself lasts for six to eight weeks, aside from being resistant to external aggression.

Lastly, you have nine shades to choose from—red, copper, gold (like mine), warm brown, basic, cool brown, violine (yes, it's a kind of violet), ash and metallic! Whew! Got it? Now bring out one-fourth sheet of paper 'coz we're having a hair-care quiz!

According to Sark, one of my favorite authors, one must live a bodacious, succulent life. "You are succulent, even if you don't know it yet. Succulence is a process of aliveness and discovery, and it means living your life in full color—out to the edges, and in celebration of your radiant, eccentric self."

So go ahead, paint yourself and your world in whatever color you wish—and do watch "Pinoy Blond" when it comes out.

What should my next hair color be? E-mail me at supertim@pldtdsl.net



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2BU! PROMO

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

CAN you believe Nadia got kicked out just because of a bad song choice? Let's see what the rest of the aspiring idols have chosen for this week.

This week, we have seven more aspiring idols to watch.

To add even more fun to this season's American idols, 2bU! and Star World have been giving away exclusive "American Idol" premium items.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win "American Idol" goodies.

Week of April 11:

1. Who was booted out among the final 8 contestants?
2. Who was in the bottom three in the April 13 episode?
3. What is the title of Fantasia's debut album?
4. Who will be receiving a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his career in radio?
5. Who are the two remaining female contestants?

Catch "American Idol" on Star World every Wednesday at 4 p.m., 8 p.m., 11:30 p.m.; Thursdays at 11 a.m., 4 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.; and Fridays at 2:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Winners for Week of April 11:

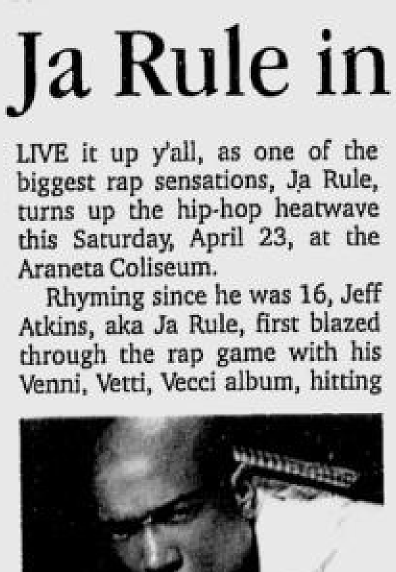
1. May Ann Stephanie dela Torre
2. Agnes Colina
3. Kristine Soto
4. Ian Tecson
5. Hector dela Sala

Winners will be notified on how they can claim their prize.

Ja Rule in Manila!

LIVE it up y'all, as one of the biggest rap sensations, Ja Rule, turns up the hip-hop heatwave this Saturday, April 23, at the Araneta Coliseum.

Rhyming since he was 16, Jeff Atkins, aka Ja Rule, first blazed through the rap game with his Venni, Vetti, Vecci album, hitting the charts with "Ain't it Funny," "Wonderful," "Put it on Me, "Rainy Days," "Clap Back" and "Furious."



JA Rule

Also set to rock the stage will be 7 Shots of Wisdom, Sun Valley Crew, Aryana and The Manila Dance Force.

Ready to holla holla? Tickets are available at all Ticketnet outlets in all SM Department stores, Podium Mall and at the Araneta Ticketing Office. Call 9115555 or visit www.ticketnet.com.ph.

A big shout out to Eventscape Manila Productions, and Smart Buddy Pre-paid, AddictMobile, PLDT My Music, PLDT Vibe and Nescafe Classic for what promises to be a trippin,' hip-hoppin' awesome night.

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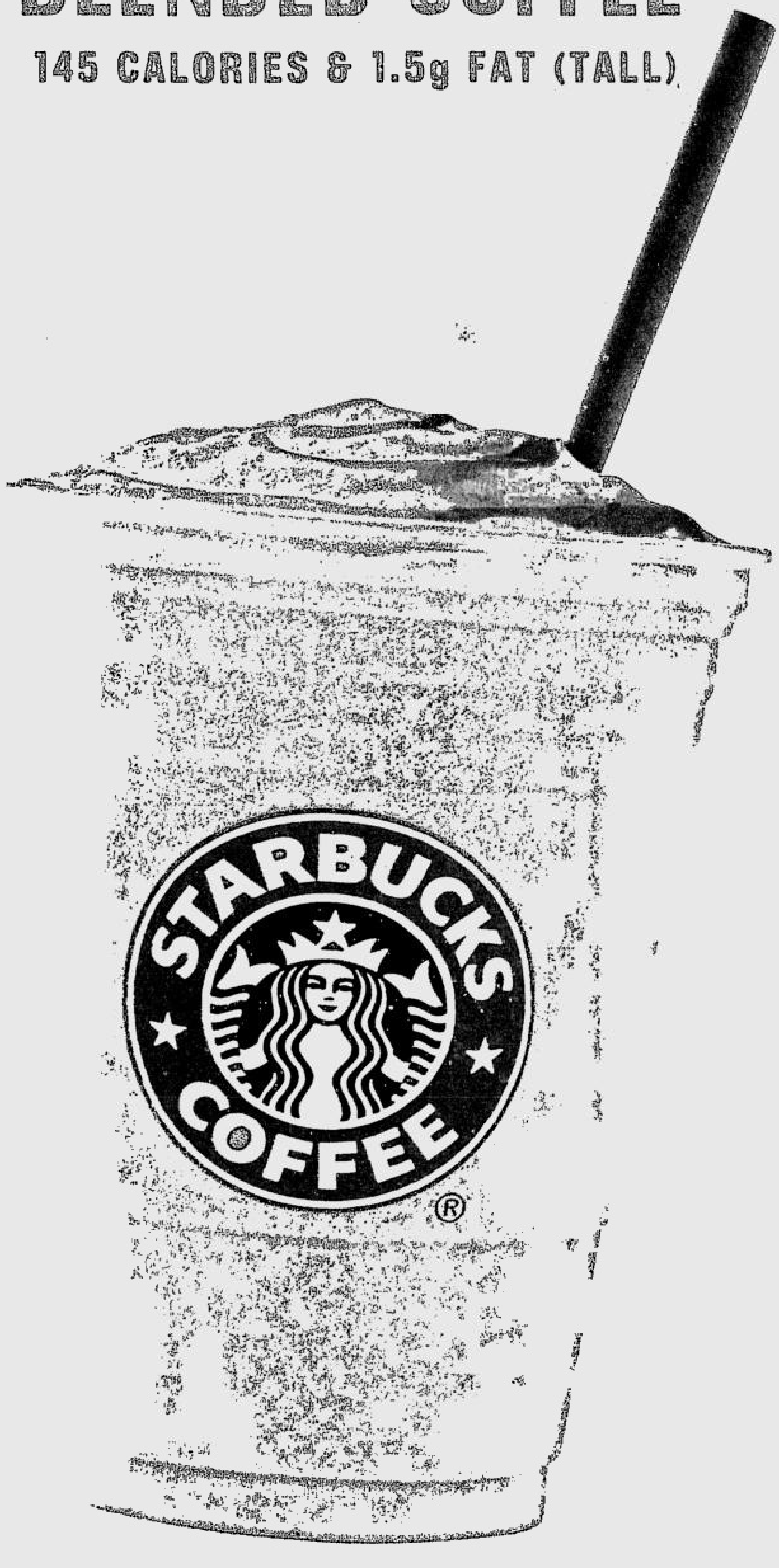

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